Tamil TIMES

"I do not agree with a word of what you say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it."

– Voltaire

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M. Sivasithamparam, President, Tamil United Liberation Front

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SORDID FACTS OF SRI LANKAN POLITICS

Recently President R. Premadasa declared at a public meeting that he was seeking a mandate from the people at the forthcoming Provincial Council elections to solve the ethnic problem on the basis of the recommendations of the Parliamentary Select Committee of MPs belonging to all political parties. This has been followed by the National Executive Committee of the ruling United National Party (UNP) headed by President Premadasa adopting a resolution 'to seek a strong mandate from the people to find and implement at the earliest a final solution to the North-East problem. . . .after giving due consideration to the recommendations of the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC), the All Party Conference (APC) and other proposals made by public interest groups and individuals'.

Several questions arise in the context of this position adopted by the President and his party. Firstly, the irony of the situation. The Provincial Council system was introduced following the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 1987 as a means to solve the ethnic conflict or more appropriately the Tamil question. It was intended as a measure of autonomy for the predominantly Tamil areas of the Northeast. At the time of its introduction, many in south Sri Lanka, including several political parties which are contesting the forthcoming elections opposed the Provincial Council system on various grounds not excluding the ground that it gave away too much to the Tamil speaking people of the Northeast. In fact, the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) boycotted the last Provincial Council elections. This time the elections are being held in the southern seven provinces and not in the Northeast. In other words, those who never asked for them, those who never wanted them and those who opposed them are today seeking power and hoping to benefit through the very same Councils.

Secondly, the overwhelming majority of the people who are going to participate, vote and decide the outcome at these elections are those who belong to the majority Sinhala community. So when the President and his party say that they are seeking a mandate from the people to solve the 'North-East problem', it means a mandate from the Sinhala people. In other words, it is only the Sinhala people and their representatives who are going to have a say in the manner in which any eventual solution of the problem is to be reached and the Tamil speaking people of the Northeast are thereby excluded from having any such say.

Thirdly, the reference to the All Party Conference. The APC was convened with much fanfare after Mr. Premadasa became President. For two long years the APC was engaged in protracted proceedings without having reached any meaningful proposal for the settlement of the problem and two years ago it was unceremoniously wound-up without having come to any conclusion. One does not understand how President Premadasa is going to give 'due consideration' to the non-existing recommendations of an APC which ceased to exist two years ago.

Fourthly, the failed APC was succeeded by the Parliamentary Select Committee about two years ago. Only now it has produced an interim draft report proposing the demerger of the Northeast into two provinces on the basis of a consensus between the two major Sinhala parties, the UNP and SLFP. Almost all the Tamil parties have rejected this proposal and also have opted out of the Select Committee proceedings for the future. When President Premadasa says that he and his party are going to give 'due consideration' to the recommendations of the PSC, it must mean the recommendations of a truncated PSC essentially based on a consensus among Sinhala political parties only.

The experience of the last four years has shown that the APC and the PSC have been nothing but exercises in deception and delay. Neither the ruling UNP or the SLFP had taken these mechanisms seriously to seek a solution to the ethnic problem. The SLFP in particular has no settled policy as to how it is going to solve the problem except in that it has always obstructed any attempt to solve it. It is doubtful whether Mr. Premadasa or the UNP will make any genuine effort to solve the problem even after the Provincial Council elections. No sooner these elections are over, the countdown phase for the Presidential election would begin, and the total and undivided attention of Mr. Premadasa and the UNP would be devoted to achieving victory at that election. They probably would regard it as politically inopportune and inexpedient to take any bold initiative to solve the ethnic problem during that period. What is politically profitable for any successful southern Sinhala politician is that the 'beggar's wound' in the form of the ethnic crisis must be kept bleeding and festering. That has been the tragic and sordid fact of politics in Sri Lanka.

Provincial Elections a Test of Strength

from Rita Sebastian in Colombo

At the Provincial Council elections scheduled for May 17, both government and opposition will be testing their respective strengths at the electorate.

President Ranasinghe Premadasa views this election primarily as an endorsement of his own personal leadership and his programme of economic development and employment generation. He made this quite clear when he told a public rally recently that 'a vote for the UNP will also be a vote for me.'

Except for the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF) dominated North-East Provincial Council, prematurely dissolved in 1990, following the threat of a unilateral declaration of independence, the other 7 councils were in the control of the UNP since the main opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), vehemently opposed to the Provincial Councils system boycotted the 1988 Provincial poll.

This time round however an SLFP-led People's United Alliance (PEP) has entered the fray. And also in the fray is the Democratic United National Front (DUNF), the breakaway faction of the UNP, led by former Ministers, Lalith Athulathmudali and Gamini Dissananayake.

So for the first time there will be a three-cornered contest in a country where traditionally a two-party system operated.

However much people dislike President Premadasa's style of governance, they have difficulty in questioning that it does provide results. The faction-ridden SLFP and the DUNF, though single-minded in their resolve to oust the UNP, have yet to produce a political programme voters can examine as an alternative to the ruling party. They have no answers to some of the country's outstanding economic and political questions.

Premadasa on the other hand has become one of the skilled advocates of the free market economy and has been successful in attracting support from the donor consortium. He has however tempered these reforms with an aggressive programme for poverty alleviation and employment generation. On the contentious northeast issue Premadasa has reiterated his commitment to implementing any solution that has majority support in the Parliamentary Select Committee.

Political observers feel that the UNP's performance at this election will depend on how many voters the breakaway DUNF will be able to spirit away. If the UNP wins this election it will consolidate and strengthen Premadasa's hand and the whole political system. Winning the provincial elections would also be seen as a fresh mandate to the government to resolve the north-east conflict. On the other hand if he were to lose at least two councils it will be interpreted as a reversal of both his political fortunes and economic reforms.

What is tragic however is the fact that elections to the northeast provinces have been put on hold until such time as the on-going war between government forces and the Tamil Tigers is brought to an end and the controversial issue of the northeast merger is resolved.

So the main beneficiary, the north-east people, for whom provincial autonomy was chiefly intended, by the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987, have been left out in the cold.

In the absence of an opinion poll, forecasts are mainly in the realm of speculation. Given the fact that the Sri Lankan voter can be both volatile and unpredictable the result is anybody's guess.

And to ensure that a 'free and fair' election is held several opposition parties, the Free Media Movement and other groups are setting up their own apparatus to monitor the poll. The government however has called in foreign observers.

HRTF Chairman on a Human Rights Crusade

by Rita Sebastian

BATTICALOA: The opening last month, of a third regional office of the Human Rights Task Force (HRTF) in Kalmunai, funded by the Australian government, was not the only reason that brought HRTF Chairman, Anthony Soza to the district.

He came looking for Visvalingam Pathmanathan reported missing since November 24, 1992 from the nearby village of Morakotanchenai. Bombarded by over 200 letters from Amnesty International (AI), Soza had already found that a man identified as Visvanathan Pathmanathan, taken into custody on the same day from the same village, had been released to his family on December 16, 1992 in the presence of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). But there was a difference in the first name. Amnesty's man was Visvalingam. Soza's man, Visvanathan.

AI was not satisfied. So Soza went to Morakotanchenai and combed the village from 'dawn to dusk' looking for Visvalingam. But no man by the name of Visvalingam had 'disappeared' from the village.

It was again the international community that sent Soza chasing a hard-core Tamil Tiger detainee identified as 'Markandu'. Markandu had complained of torture. Soza met him in an army camp. Two months later when Soza met him again he had no complaints about his treatment.

That is how seriously Soza takes his job. No case is brushed aside. Every single complaint is looked into. And he goes combing army camps and detention centres looking for missing persons.

'Of the fresh cases reported I have traced every single one of them' he says.

According to Human Rights groups, both local and foreign, most of those who disappeared after fresh hostilities broke out between the Tigers and government forces in June 1990, were from the Batticaloa district.

Each morning for the past month, Peace Committee member, Cherian Perinpanayagam, has been recording the names of the women widowed by the on-going war. He already has 800 names on his list. Proof has to be furnished in the form of a death certificate or a letter from the Government Agent certifying the death.

Perinpanayagam's estimated 4000 'disappearances' from Batticaloa in the last three years is corroborated by Fr. Harry Miller, the American Jesuit, who came to the island 'when the British were being kicked out,' in the mid-forties.

'It is not happening now as often as before', says Fr. Miller of disappearances in the district. 'Earlier only one in 10 came back. It is now very much in the other direction'.

But there are still families in Batticaloa who go looking for fathers and sons. Parvathy, 56, is looking for her son Subramainaiam Jegatheeswaran who was taken from his home in February 1991. A man identifying himself as a former prisoner at Welikade jail has written to Parvathy that her son is still in prison in Colombo.

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Select Committee 'Consensus' – a Non-Event and a Revelation

Seven Tamil political parties, in a letter to Secretary-General of Parliament Nihal Seneviratne, comprising their collective response to the interim report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on the north-east issue, have appealed to 'secular democratic forces working among the Sinhala people as well as to the international community to mediate in solving the "national question" that is just, rational and equitable.'

The letter signed by representatives of these seven parties said: 'the long-awaited interim report which was submitted to PSC in a "draft" form by its chairman, is both a revelation as well as a non-event.

'It is revealing, in the sense, it confirms the lack of will of the Sinhala polity represented in Parliament, regardless of whether it is the ruling UNP or the major opposition, the SLFP, to come to grips with the legitimate grievances and aspirations of the Tamil people.

'It is a non-event in the sense the so-called "Draft" is a mere elaboration of the note handed over to the Speaker of Parliament by the Chairman of the Select Committee on December 16, 1992, containing what was termed the "majority decision" of the committee.

'The handing over of the note by the chairman which was done without consulting the PSC, can only be interpreted as a response to the non-acceptance by the Tamil parties on December 14, 1992, made public through the media, of the "majority decision" reached at the PSC meeting of December 11, 1992 to de-link the presently merged North-Eastern Province,' the letter added.

The 3-page response also states that the 'majority agreement' contained in the interim report by no means suggested a Tamil-Sinhala consensus, but yet another shabby attempt at unilaterally imposing a Sinhala sectarian opinion on the Tamil people.

The Tamil parties represented therefore have taken a decision to dissociate themselves from the contemplated future proceedings of the Committee.

They said that while the report individually identified the parties comprising the so-called 'majority agreement' (i.e. the UNP, SLFP, SLMC, CP, LSSP as well as the 'independent members' K. Srinivasan and Basheer Segudawood), it fails to identify the seven Tamil parties which have collectively placed the 4-point formula before the committee, while only referring by name to the CWC and the TULF.

'We see this as yet another childish attempt at trying to conceal a Tamil consensus on the question of the unit of devolution.' the seven parties stated.

The response added the 'majority agreement' of the PSC totally disregards the unanimous demand of the Tamil parties as regards the need for a unified politico-administrative entity for a clearly defined politico-administrative unit.

'We are of the opinion that such a unit, which has historically been a predominantly Tamil-speaking region, is essential to safeguard and foster the identity, security and the socio-economic advancement of the Tamil-speaking people,' the parties said.

'We also note with concern that the scheme of devolution contemplated by majority members in the PSC, based on positions taken during the deliberations, is not conducive to crucial subjects such as law and order and land being fully devolved.

'It must also be noted that sections like 2, 3, 4, 75 and 76 in the Lankan Constitution, which militates against meaningful devolution, are not found in the Indian Constitution', they added.

Asian Govts. Gang-up to Resist Pressure on Human Rights Issue

BANGKOK, – Asian governments recently haggled over a resolution which non-governmental organisations (NGOs) fear hard-line states will use to oppose outside monitoring of their human rights records.

Key provisions of a declaration being drafted by delegates of an Asian human rights conference in Bangkok said linking development assistance to human rights should be discouraged and using criticism of human rights to exert political pressure on a government opposed.

Non-governmental organisations attending the conference said that while they were pleasantly surprised by a few provisions included in the latest draft, which is still under discussion, they were alarmed by most others.

Cecilia Jimenez, spokeswoman for the NGOs, said it was positive that the draft emphasised that human rights should be universal and that civil and political rights should be given equal emphasis to economic, social and cultural rights.

She also praised its provision for promoting and protecting women's rights.

But she said much of the rest of the document reflected pressure from hard-line states like Iran, Burma, Indonesia and China, which have been heavily criticised for abusing human rights.

'In a way it could be said to be anti-human rights', she said.

Several of the hard-line Asian governments have rounded on Western domination of the human rights issue at the United Nations and on what they describe as unfair and selective criticisms.

A copy of the draft resolution seen by Reuters stresses 'an urgent need to democratise the United Nations system, eliminate selectivity and to devise procedures which would strengthen international cooperation based on principles of equality and mutual respect. . .'.

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But sadly for Parvathy the jail authorities have told her that her son is not being held by them. 'There are times when for security reasons the army does not immediately announce the names of those taken into custody', says Soza explaining the army's role in what he describes 'as a very difficult situation.'

But Cumraswamy Sinnamuthu is one of the more fortunate ones. She has a receipt to say her son is being held in prison in Colombo. As proof she has received a letter from him.

Giving receipts to next of kin of those taken into custody by the army, was one of AI's recommendations to the Sri Lanka government.

'What we really need in Batticaloa is for the law courts to function. Then at least the people will have the protection of the law' says Fr. Miller, who is optimistic that in the new climate of an 'approachable army and police' the district's human rights situation will improve.

PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE

An Assessment

The following is the text of a statement issued by the Eelam Peoples Revolutionaryj Liberation Front (EPRLF) following the rejection by seven Tamil parties and the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) of the recent 'Draft Interim Report' by the Parliamentary Select Committee which has been deliberating on a solution to the ethnic problem:

1. Following the collapse of the All Party Conference (APC), which was initiated by the Sri Lankan Government to accommodate the LTTE during their 'honeymoon' in 1989-90, the Government took the decision to initiate yet another process.

Accordingly, a motion was moved in Parliament by Mr. Mangala Moonesinghe of the opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), clearly in consultation with the Government, to set-up a Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) to seek ways and means of resolving the ethnic problem. This motion was unanimously adopted by Parliament on 9th August 1991 and the PSC commenced its sittings on 20.11.91. The choice of Mr. Mangala Moonesinghe, as the Chairman of the PSC, was inevitable given the support he enjoyed from the members of the ruling United National Party (UNP) at the instance of the President himself.

2. It was clear from the inception that the terms of reference of the PSC, as well as its composition, was biased against the Tamil interests.

For instance, the earlier formulation of the terms of reference which referred to the need for a political solution to the 'national question' was amended by Mr. Mangala Moonesinghe to read, 'to arrive at a political solution to the question involving the devolution of power to the Northern and Eastern Provinces.' By this, a bias in favour of de-linking the presently merged North-Eastern Province was made explicit.

Similarly, the composition of the PSC which had a total membership of 45, was weighted decisively in favour of the Sinhala Parties, with the ruling UNP having an absolute majority. As a result, the PSC, dominated by Sinhala Parties, lacked sensitivity towards the legitimate grievances and aspirations of the Tamil-speaking people. This was amply demonstrated by the low turn-out of members at the sittings of the PSC, often, resulting in the Chairman having to send out the personnel in his Secretariat to round-up sufficient members to ensure the quorum of 14.

3. Despite the above limitations, the 5 Tamil Parliamentary parties represented in the PSC (i.e. the EPRLF, TULF, ENDLF, TELO and EROS), as well as the two Tamil parties not represented in Parliament (i.e. PLOTE and ACTC), decided to extend their full cooperation to the PSC, in what was seen as the last chance for a political solution to the ethnic question. Accordingly, the Tamil parties proceeded to place their proposals individually before the PSC and also sent their respective delegates to the PSC in response to the invitation by the Chairman to make their oral submissions.

4. In addition to reiterating their expectations of the PSC, the seven Tamil political parties, in a Joint Memorandum of 22.4.1992, stressed the need for a unified politico-administrative entity for the permanently merged North-Eastern Province as a basic prerequisite for a broadly acceptable solution.

5. It must be noted that while the Tamil parties were engaged in this exercise, none of the major Sinhala political parties, including the ruling UNP and the opposition SLFP, had come out with their proposals before the PSC. Despite this, the seven Tamil parties further elaborated on their proposals and formulated what is now commonly termed the 4-PT Formula. This was given wide publicity in the media.

In addition, the Tamil parties, following a meeting with the President and leading members of the ruling UNP, met the main Opposition Parties, the SLFP, DUNF, CPSL, LSSP and the NSSP, in an attempt at forging a Tamil-Sinhala consensus on the basis of the 4-PT Formula. Except for the NSSP, all the other Southern political parties were either non-committal or non-supportive of the 4-PT Formula. The 4-PT Formula was also endorsed by the CWC and formally placed before the PSC on 17th June 1992.

6. Coincidentally, on the very same day, the Chairman of the PSC, Mr. Mangala Moonesinghe, circulated what was termed a 'Concept Paper' which provided for two distinct Provincial Councils for the Northern and Eastern provinces, respectively. Further, it suggested an 'Apex Assembly' whose powers and structure were left ambiguous and vague.

The seven Tamil political parties and the CWC responded separately to the 'Concept Paper' expressing dissatisfaction at the proposals contained in the 'Concept Paper'.

7. Following this, some of the Tamil political parties, including the EPRLF and TULF, held informal discussions with the Chairman of the PSC and his advisory panel, on ways and means of narrowing the differences in relation to the unit of devolution. It appeared, at these discussions, that the Chairman was agreeable to substantial devolution to the merged North-Eastern region, while providing some institutional arrangements to safeguard the interests of the minority Sinhalese and Muslims in this region.

8. However, yet another surprise was sprung on the Tamil Parties when at the PSC meeting of 14.10.92, the Chairman circulated what was termed 'An Option Paper'. The 'Option Paper' was just an elaboration of the earlier 'Concept Paper' and failed to reflect the inputs that the EPRLF, TULF and some other Tamil parties had suggested in the earlier informal discussions with the Chairman and his advisory panel.

The seven Tamil political parties and the CWC, finding the 'Concept Paper' to be inadequate, responded by rejecting it as not constituting a basis for negotiations.

9. The height of perfidy was when a proposal of Mr. K. Srinivasan, Member of Parliament for Jaffna District, who had earlier been expelled by the ENDLF, was floated as a proposal and circulated at the PSC meeting of 14.11.92.

The proposal sought to 'compensate' the de-linking of the presently merged North-Eastern Province by replacing the present unitary constitution with a federal one. At this meeting, the Chairman, Mr. Mangala Moonesinghe, announced that Madame Bandaranaike had verbally extended her support for the 'Srinivasan Proposal'. At which point, Mr. Hameed, a senior Cabinet Minister, intervened and assured that the ruling UNP would likewise back the proposal.

However, at the PSC meeting of the 11th December, on the basis of a hand-vote called by the Chairman, the majority (including members of the UNP and SLFP) voted for just Point 2 of the Srinivasan Proposal, which refers to 'de-linking', while rejecting the

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TULF President Explains Party Stand

Mr. M. Sivasithamparam, the President of the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), who was in London recently, in a wideranging interview with the Editor of Tamil Times, explained why the TULF and other Tamil parties had rejected the interim 'majority consensus' announced by the Chairman of the Parliamentary Select Committee. He also took the opportunity to answer questions relating to the role of India, the background to the Indo-Sri Lanka Accord, the expulsion of the Muslims from the North, state-aided colonisation in the east, the assassination of the TULF leaders and its impact on the party.

Q: *Your party, the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF), has been participating in the proceedings of the Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) from its inception. What is the substance of the proposals you submitted to the PSC?*

A: Originally the TULF submitted a set of proposals, the salient aspects of which were:

(a) Sri Lanka to be constituted into a Union of States;

(b) One unit consisting of the Northern and Eastern Provinces;

(c) There should be no Governor as is the case under the 13th Amendment;

(d) Powers including those relating to land and law and order to be vested upon the Provincial Councils;

(e) The PCs to have exclusive legislative power relating to devolved subjects;

(f) The Chief Minister and Board of Ministers to be vested with exclusive executive powers relating to subjects and functions transferred to the PCS;

(g) The laws enacted by the PCs to become effective on the presiding officer certifying as to its enactment;

(h) Institutional arrangements to be incorporated to protect the rights and interests of the Muslim people; and

(i) The Sinhalese people resident in the Northeast to enjoy the same rights as those enjoyed by Tamils in the rest of the country.

Subsequently seven Tamil parties, including the TULF and the Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC) led by Mr. S. Thondaman, submitted a four-point formula as a basis for negotiation for the solution of the ethnic problem:

(1) One politico-administrative unit consisting of the North and East;

(2) Meaningful devolution of powers to Provincial Councils;

(3) Institutional arrangements for Muslims; and

(4) Sinhalese in the Northeast to have same rights as Tamils would have in the other provinces.

Later the seven Tamil parties submitted detailed proposals on the basis of these four points.

The PSC Consensus

Q: *Recently, the Chairman of the PSC released what he described as a 'consensus' of a proposed solution to the conflict. What are the proposals contained in this 'consensus'?*

A: The Chairman was entirely wrong to describe the proposal released by him as a 'consensus proposal'. The PSC consisted of Members of Parliament of Sinhalese and Tamil political parties. 'Consensus' must mean agreement between these two groups of MPs. The two main Sinhalese parties, the UNP and SLFP, accepted these (even though the LSSP and MEP did not agree). But the Tamil parties did not accept them. Hence there is no 'consensus'. The two main recommendations of the so-called consensus proposals set out by the Chairman of the PSC are: (a) Two separate Provincial Councils for the Northern and Eastern Provinces; and (b) Devolution of powers on the pattern of the Indian Constitution.

Q: *Several Tamil parties represented in the PSC have rejected this 'consensus'. How was this 'consensus' reached, and why have you rejected it? And why do you insist that the Northern and Eastern Provinces should remain merged as a single unit?*

A: While the proposals of the Tamil parties, CWC and even the Chairman's Option Paper (which provided for two separate PCs for the North and East with one Apex Council covering the North and East) were lying on the table of the PSC for months without having been taken up for any discussion or consideration), the proposals now known as 'Srinivasan proposals' were taken up for discussion on the very day they were tabled. To add weight to these proposals, the Chairman announced that the leader of the SLFP, Mrs. S. Bandaranaike had accepted them, and Mr. Sahul Hameed declared that the UNP too had accepted the proposals. The alacrity with which the two spokesmen announced the acceptance of these proposals revealed that they had foreknowledge of them. The UNP and SLFP spokesmen also said that they were not agreeable to the 'federalism' mentioned in the Srinivasan proposals. Despite protest from MPs belonging to the Tamil parties, the Chairman asked the members to say 'Yes' or 'No' and announced that the majority had accepted the proposals. So the only proposal that was declared by the Chairman to have been ultimately accepted was the 'demerger' of the Northeast, and 'federalism' became 'Indian pattern'. This entire episode clearly demonstrates that both the major Sinhala parties have not the political will to face the Tamil problem squarely and find an honest political solution.

Reasons for Merger

All major Tamil parties have rejected these two proposals. The TULF has on many occasions given very cogent reasons as to why the Northern and Eastern provinces should constitute one politico-administrative unit. To state briefly, the reasons are:

(a) Despite efforts by successive governments at demographic changes by state-aided colonisation, the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of the Northeast are Tamil speaking. To ensure that the linguistic and cultural identity and heritage of the people are protected, preserved and developed, these provinces should remain as a single unit; unless there are ulterior motives, there is no reason to bifurcate these two physically contiguous areas;

(b) North and East are physically contiguous and they should continue to remain as one unit to ensure the safety and security of the Tamil speaking people;

(c) It is a fact that since independence, the Tamil areas of the Northeast have been economically neglected by successive governments. To make up for almost complete absence of economic development and to enable these areas to become economically viable, they should remain as one unit;

(d) The substantial demographic changes that have already taken place in the east by a continuing process of state-aided colonisation have progressively reduced the proportion of Tamil speaking people vis-a-vis the non-Tamil speaking people. The linking of the numerically strong Tamil speaking north with the east is the only way in which this deliberately created im-

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balance can be rectified. If the Eastern Province is to become a separate unit, the Tamil speaking element of the population will continue to become weaker and weaker, and Tamils themselves will become a helpless minority in a few years in an area in which historically they have been an overwhelming majority.

A Red Herring

To speak of devolution of power on the pattern of the Indian Constitution is a red herring and intended to pull the wool over everbody's eyes. India is a Union of States and the powers of States constitute form part and parcel of the fundamental structure of the Constitution itself, and the Supreme Court of India has in many cases ruled that the Central Government cannot, even by an amendment to the Indian Constitution whittle away the powers of the States. On the other hand, the Sri Lankan Constitution has an entrenched Article which stipulates Sri Lanka being a Unitary State. Unless fundamental amendments to Articles 2, 3, 4, 75 and 76 of the Sri Lankan Constitution are enacted (which may even require approval at a referendum), talking of devolution of power to the Provincial Councils on the 'Indian pattern' is an exercise in deception.

If the UNP, SLFP and the Chairman of the PSC want us to believe that they are serious about devolving powers on the 'Indian pattern', let them first, before proposing the demerger of the Northeast, consider and submit detailed proposals as to how they intend to do so setting out at the same time the powers they propose to devolve on the provinces.

Q: ***You accepted the solution to the ethnic conflict on the basis of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement of July 1987. Did the TULF leadership have a hand in the proposals for a Provincial Council system contained in the Agreement?***

A: The concept of the Provincial Council system was first put forward in the famous 'Annexure C', the authorship of which was credited to Shri G. Parthasarathy, who visited Colombo after the July 1983 anti-Tamil riots as the Special envoy of the then Indian Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi. It was in fact a document jointly subscribed to by President Jayawardene and Parthasarathy in late 1983. For the first time, President Jayawardene accepted the system of Provincial Councils.

However, this document did not provide for the merger of the North and East. We from the TULF protested at this omission and made representations to the Indian Prime Minister. She told us that she had strongly urged upon President Jayawardene the need to have a provision for the merger of the north and east, but he had told her that he would not be able to 'sell' a proposal for merger to the Sinhalese, and he had added that the TULF could raise the matter at the All Party Conference (APC) and that he would personally support it. It was on this basis that the TULF agreed to participate in the APC.

Indo-Sri Lanka Accord

The proceedings of the APC dragged on and on without reaching any meaningful solution, and President Jayawardene unceremoniously declared it wound-up. After Rajiv Gandhi succeeded as Prime Minister, bilateral discussions between a Cabinet team led by President Jayawardene and the TULF commenced. These discussions centred around the powers to be devolved to the Provincial Council. Agreement was reached on some areas, but no agreement was reached on matters such as legislative and executive powers, emergency powers and land and its uses. A team led by Indian Cabinet Minister Chidamparam came to Sri Lanka in late 1986 and agreement was reached on further areas, and these are contained in what later came to be known as the 'Chidamparam Proposals'.

By the beginnings of 1986, and in the midst of these negotiations, Sri Lankan security forces launched major military operations in the north which eventually led to Indian intervention in the form of airdrops of humanitarian aid in Jaffna. This was followed by the signing of the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement. It must be remembered that the Agreement provided that matters which were not finalised between the Government and the TULF would be further discussed, and India would be consulted before draft legislation to implement the Agreement was presented to Parliament. However, the Bills for the 13th Amendment to the Constitution and the Provincial Councils Act were presented to Parliament before any such consultation. The TULF protested both to Premier Rajiv Gandhi and President Jayawardene detailing the deficiencies contained in the two Bills. After the SAARC conference in Khatmandu, President went to Delhi and we too went to Delhi at the invitation of Rajiv Gandhi. After two days of discussion, about 11 matters in the Bills were identified that needed amending. President Jayawardene undertook to remedy these deficiencies after the Presidential elections. But like many other undertakings, nothing was done.

Therefore, the TULF had no direct role in drafting the 13th Amendment or the Provincial Councils Act. We accepted the solution subject to our stated reservations, but it must be emphasised that the Accord was the nearest we ever came to meeting the aspirations of the Tamil speaking people. The one matter that gave us grave concern was the proposed referendum in the Eastern Province on the question of merger and we objected to it to which the reply from Shri Rajiv Gandhi was (I am quoting his words), 'Don't worry. Leave it to me. The referendum will never be held'. This assurance was given to us on the basis of the assurance given by the President Jayawardene to Rajiv Gandhi. In fact there is provision for the indefinite postponement of the referendum, and even now it remains postponed.

Q: ***Do you now think that a solution could have been reached if the Agreement and the Provincial Council system had worked out in practice?***

A: Certainly. If the Interim Administration had been set up and worked while the IPKF was still in the Northeast, the full benefits of the Accord would have accrued to the Tamil people. With the Interim Administration becoming scuttled, and after the commencement of the confrontation between the IPKF and the LTTE, the implementation of the Accord went hay-wire, and the southern politicians took advantage of the situation to see that the total benefits of the Accord did not accrue to the Tamil speaking people.

Q: ***Do you accept that Tamil-Muslim relations have deteriorated, and this has made a solution based on Tamil-Muslim unity difficult particularly in the east?***

A: Yes. The cordial relations that existed between the Tamil and Muslim communities have been completely ruptured. Both these communities speak the same language and have historically faced similar problems arising out of the discriminatory policies pursued by successive governments. We must try our best to restore the good relations that have traditionally existed between these communities.

Colonisation in Trinco

Q: ***Recently, your party met President Premadasa to complain about***

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'Sinhalese colonisation' in the east, particularly in the Trincomalee district. What is the scale and extent of this 'colonisation' problem?

A: When we talk about 'Sinhala colonisation', we do not refer to those Sinhala people who have lived in the Tamil areas for several decades. We only refer to new settlements with state-aid. We object to such settlements which are designed to and which have the effect of causing substantial demographic change which in course of time renders the Tamil speaking people numerically weaker. We now note that Sinhalese have been settled in semi-permanent houses on both sides of the Kandy Road from the border of the Eastern Province right up to the entrance of Trincomalee town. We also have evidence that in certain villages in the Trincomalee district, the homes of Tamils who fled to India as refugees have been permitted to be occupied by new arrivals of Sinhalese. For example, recently when some Tamils were returned from India, they could not reoccupy their homes because they have already been occupied by Sinhalese.

Lands belonging to Hindu temples have been allowed to be occupied by Sinhala people. The sacred 'Theerthakarai' of the historic Koneswara temple in Trincomalee facing the sea has been permitted to be occupied with the active help of the security forces. They have also occupied the land set apart for the use of the Trincomalee port. I do not have the exact figures with me here in London, but will send them to you when I return to Colombo. But the extent of such colonisation particularly in Trincomalee is alarming.

Q: ***Some Tamils have criticised the role of India to the effect that it had let the Tamils down. What is your view?***

A: India never let down the Tamils. We let ourselves down. India must play a continuing role in finding a political solution to our problem. She is our only friend. Who else is there?

Criticism Against TULF

Q: ***The TULF was once the leading party of the Tamil community. You will accept that since 1983 it has remained mainly on the sidelines. What happened to this once most popular party?***

A: I do not agree that the TULF has remained on the sidelines since 1983. I have already explained to you the role the TULF leadership played in the negotiating process in the run-up to the Indo-Sri Lanka Agreement. During the post 1983 period, the TULF played a leading role in lobbying and canvassing support for the Tamil cause in India and many capitals of the world.

If there is difference in the perception of our role, it is because: (a) The Government deliberately set out to marginalise us and our party in the parliamentary and political arena by passing the 6th Amendment to the Constitution and thus virtually outlawing our party; (b) We believed in the unity of the Tamil speaking people, and therefore when other Tamil groups carried on a campaign of maliciously maligning us, we resisted our temptation to hit back, and therefore our detractors had a field day; (c) We had to refrain from giving publicity to certain aspects of our work relating to negotiations with Heads of State because of the need to observe the principle of confidentiality; (d) Tamil politics became more and more violent and the use of weapons became predominant and romanticised, and we as a party not carrying arms had to play a different role; (e) The intolerance and brutalisation that characterised the politics of the armed groups did not permit our normal political work among the people. For example, on one occasion when we tried to carry on our agitation against the Sri Lankan government in a non-violent manner by observing a fast at the Veerakaly Amman Temple, militants of all groups physically intervened and disrupted our campaign. Our main objective was to help the Tamil cause by seeking just solution to the problem of our people, and not hitting the headlines.

A Canard

Q: ***Some have criticised that the leaders of the TULF led a comfortable life in Tamil Nadu during the difficult years of 1984 to 1987, and thereby lost touch with the people and the right to lead them. Any comments?***

A: This is a canard that has to be nailed once and for all, and I thank you for giving me the opportunity. After the holocaust of July 1983, TULF's Central Committee met in Vavuniya and everybody urged our Secretary General Mr. Amirthalingam to go to India immediately. He disguised himself and went to Madras and Delhi. After his visit to Madras, huge protest demonstrations were held throughout Tamil Nadu. In Delhi, he met and briefed the then Indian Prime Minister Shrimathi Indira Gandhi. It was after that she declared in the Indian Parliament, 'This is almost genocide. Sri Lanka is not another country to India'. She then despatched her Special Emissary, Shri G. Parthasarathy, to Colombo to express India's concern about the violent developments in Sri Lanka.

Throughout 1984 we had talks with President Jayawardene in Colombo and often we went to Jaffna after the talks. But then two events took place. The first was when from an army truck, a huge brick was hurled at Mr. Amirthalingam's car and his windscreen was smashed. My car was stopped by army personnel, our party Rising Sun flag was snatched and trampled and my driver was assaulted, and it was clear that those blows were meant for me. Further the telephone wires of Mr. Amirthalingam's house and my house were cut. We could not just function from Jaffna. So some of us decided to go to Madras for the time being and mobilise support for the Tamil cause. But the rest of our leadership and party workers remained in the Tamil areas.

Unfair Criticism

But we who went to Madras did not just sit there. This was the time when every day hundreds of people from the north and east were streaming into India as refugees because of military operations. Thousands of Tamil youth were being rounded-up and taken into custody in the north. Mr. Amirthalingam and I went to many countries, met prominent politicians, church leaders, men of the media, addressed groups of politicians, and addressed Tamils in many countries to appraise them of the plight of our people. We were engaged in seeking international support for our cause. Along with Mr. R. Sampanthan, we often went to Delhi and walked miles along the corridors of the South Block to inform about the military excesses and atrocities committed against our people. Let me put on record that the facilities that the militants had from India and the unstinted support given to the tens of thousands of Tamil refugees who had sought refugee in India was in no small measure due to our efforts.

When the government imposed the economic blockade of Jaffna in early 1987, and the people were deprived of food and medicines and later when government forces launched massive military operations to take over Jaffna, it was our efforts that made India to intervene and to airdrop humanitarian aid to Jaffna, and call a halt to military operations that were aimed at the army takeover of the Jaffna peninsula.

Those who unfairly criticise us should also not forget the brutal murders of our respected colleagues and former MPs, Mr. V. Dharmalaingam and Mr. M. Alalasundaram, and it must be stated that they were not

killed by security service personnel but by so-called Tamil militants. They also should not forget that, not so long after their murders, posters were put up in Jaffna to the effect that death sentences had been passed on the TULF leaders then in Madras, and we are sure this was done to deter the presence of the TULF leaders in Jaffna.

We know that the people have not lost faith in us. If they remain silent, it is largely through fear.

The Assassination

Q: ***Your General Secretary A. Amirthalingam and your colleague and former MP, V. Yogeswaran were assassinated in Colombo in June 1989. You escaped death with serious injuries in the same incident. The Tigers, first having denied, later admitted responsibility for the murders. Why do you think that they carried out these murders, and have you any comments?***

A: The cruel assassination of Amirthalingam and Yogeswaran is the subject matter of pending criminal proceedings and therefore sub-judice. Any comments on the subject of these assassinations would be premature. If the people do not know the truth already, it will come out, and let us wait and see.

Q: ***You worked with Mr. Amirthalingam for a number of years. How do you assess him as a political leader?***

A: Mr. Amirthalingam is the greatest Tamil leader after the late Mr. S.J.V. Chelvanayakam. He was one of the most charismatic political leaders of Sri Lanka. His knowledge of Sri Lankan politics was encyclopaedic and he had an analytical brain. He was a fearless leader. He had a very good command of both the Tamil and the English languages. He was a man of learning – he could quote without a note from Thirukural, Purananooru, Ahananooru, Mahabhratha, Ramayanam, Manimekalai and other Tamil classics. With equal ease, he could quote from English classics. He was a brilliant public speaker and parliamentary debater, and his speeches would remain as testimony to his service to his people. His selfless devotion and dedication to the Tamil cause was unrivalled and he made the supreme sacrifice with his life for the Tamil cause and joined the ranks of famous martyrs like Abraham Lincoln, Mahathma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi.

Q: ***You knew Mr. Yogeswaran very closely. How do you assess him?***

A: Mr. Yogeswaran was an amiable and pleasant companion. He was an ardent champion for the Tamil cause. His special concern was for the poor and the downtrodden. He was the darling of the youth. No one who went to him for help came away empty handed. He gave leadership by practice. He was a rising star in the Tamil political firmament.

Q: ***How did the assassination of the TULF leaders and the attack on you affect the party's activities in the following years?***

A: Certainly the untimely death of two senior leaders was a big blow to the party. In the death of Amirthalingam, not only the TULF, the Tamil people lost a great leader and a fearless fighter for their cause. He was the most well known of the TULF leaders both nationally and internationally. The Indian political leaders had implicit faith in him. His untimely and tragic departure and the circumstances in which the TULF leaders were attacked certainly had an adverse impact on the party. Having come to be aware that we have become targets, there were some who were frightened even to talk to us or talk about us. When the politics of the gun rules, normal democratic politics takes a back seat. Yet our flag has been kept flying.

Q: ***You were a well-known as a capable lawyer. You do not practice the law as a profession now. When and why did you give up practice?***

A: During the July 1983 violence, my house in Colombo together with all my law books were set on fire. The Sixth Amendment to the Constitution which was enacted within two weeks of the riots required even lawyers to take an oath of allegiance to the unitary state of Sri Lanka and criminalised the advocacy of separatism. I gave up practice then.

Q: ***You were a respected MP, a one-time Deputy Speaker of Parliament and known as a skilful debater. do you miss being an MP?***

A: It will be hypocrisy on my part if I say I do not feel flattered about what you are saying. But my greatest satisfaction is that I always did my duty by the Tamil people, and that I did not stoop to dirty tricks in either my professional career or political life. I would very much like to be an MP, but only after a legitimate victory in a fair and free election.

Q: ***How do you see the future of the Tamils in Sri Lanka and chances of a settlement of the conflict?***

A: If we Tamils remain united, if we are firm in our convictions, if we know our friends, if we do not senselessly offend our friends, if we treat others as fairly as we would like them to treat us, and if we honestly think that every Tamil is entitled to the freedom to live and work, then the Tamils have a bright future, and this conflict can be brought to an end with justice to all concerned.

TAMIL – MUSLIM RELATIONS
Tigers Trying to Make Amends?

The LTTE arrested 18 Muslim fishermen in the sea off the Batticaloa coast recently. They were taken to Nasivanthivu – a small islet of coconut groves situated between the sea and the Valaichenai lagoon. There the Tigers treated them well and lectured to them on the necessity of Muslim-Tamil amity in the east. The surprised Muslim fishermen were safely sent back soon after. The matter was promptly reported in the Tamil daily Virakesari.

The LTTE's attempt to befriend the Muslims once more has been going on for some time. It began last year when a respectable relative of a senior LTTE leader in Batticaloa visited the Muslim village of Oddamavadi and informed some people known to him there that the LTTE wanted peace with that village and that they would permit Muslims to come into their areas to cultivate or bring timber. The Muslims of Kattankudy have also been apprised recently that they also can come into LTTE dominated areas and carry on with their cultivation, and that the Tigers would ensure that no harm would come to them from Tamils. There are reports that the LTTE has made peace with Eravur as well.

The government is alarmed and worried by this development. Although Muslim-Tamil relations in the east have not improved in general, the small openings that may become available to the Tigers among the Muslims can affect the military balance there. Supplies for the LTTE from almost all the main Tamil population centres have substantially dwindled following special operations by the army to debilitate the LTTE's logistics in the east. In addition to this

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the military intelligence has recruited and made use of a large number of ex-militants to permeate all levels of Tamil society in the east with a view to neutralise potential sources of supply. Therefore it has become absolutely necessary for the Tigers in the east to make peace with the Muslims. But both sides are not so naive as to think that the bitter and deep mistrust between them can be removed in months or even in years. The LTTE is approaching the problem with its customary pragmatism – the Muslims can resume their economic activities in areas dominated by them and that there would be no attacks on the Muslim community in return for their friendship and therefore – supplies.

Tiger Approach

There seems to be a much broader reason as well for this change in attitude on the part of the LTTE. It is connected to pressures emanating from the LTTE's Tamil nationalist support base in Tamil Nadu. Therefore the Muslim-LTTE relationship can properly be grasped only when it is examined in its social and historical setting.

There have been attempts in recent times to pin down the precise reason for the LTTE's repeated and bloody attacks on the Muslim community in the eastern province and areas bordering it. At one extreme there are those who see a Zionist anti-Muslim conspiracy that has acquired the services of the Liberation Tigers, and at the other, there are those analysts who are labouring to establish for their own ideological reasons, that it is but a manifestation of Tamil 'narrow nationalism' and fascism. The Zionist conspiracy theorists such as Ashraff are usually prompt in claiming that they are aware of an Israeli intelligence official's connection with the Tigers in a western capital. An expatriate leader of an anti-LTTE group insists that the Tigers were given weapons through this official in return for carrying out orders to regularly massacre Muslims! But as with so many other things about the LTTE, no one can substantiate their claims with anything but hearsay. The Tigers have systematically made their organisational structure so impervious that today even intelligence gathering on them seems to depend more on hearsay. The grenade attack on Pottu Amman is a case in point. Hence, it would be more sensible to place the LTTE's attitude towards the Muslim community in context, than to advance and corroborate a unique and therefore politically interesting cause which might please an editor and amuse one's readers.

The attitude of the Liberation Tigers of Thamil Eelam towards the Muslims has to be examined in terms of:

a) the political–cultural status of the Muslims in the agenda of Tamil linguistic nationalism.

b) the history and dynamics of Tamil–Muslim relations in the eastern province.

c) the IPKF's intervention in Muslim politics in the east.

d) the evolution of LTTE's eastern province leadership.

The Tamil Nadu Dimension

The Liberation Tigers are a product of Tamil linguistic nationalism and secessionism which arose in south India and gradually shaped the vocabulary of Tamil regional politics in Sri Lanka. The historical and geographical specificities apart, the core of LTTE's Tamil nationalist ideology is constituted by the basic tenets of the Dravidian movement. The political exigency of appealing to the Tamil Diaspora has made the LTTE lay claim to the movement's ideals and legacy.

The Muslims were politically and culturally an important component of Tamil linguistic nationalism from the time it took on a militant character in the thirties. The Dravidian movement found common cause with Jinna's Muslim League in its opposition to Hindu-Brahmin dominance in the Indian national independence movement. The founder of the Dravidian movement, E.V. Ramasamy Naiker once declared that if Dravidastan could not become an independent and sovereign nation, it should come under Pakistan rather than independent India. (*Ariya Mayai,* C.N. Annathurai, p.36).

The Muslims of southern Tamil Nadu had under the patronage of trade based little kingdoms of Tamil rulers and chieftains, cultivated a unique and rich tradition of Tamil literature. Hence, Muslims of Tamil Nadu and the Muslim League took a major role in the anti-Hindi agitations of the Dravidian movement in the thirties, not only for political reasons, but for cultural reasons as well. Besides Arabic, Persian and Urdu, Tamil is one of the few languages in which Islam has produced an impressive corpus of religious poetry ranging from the mystic to the folk. The Dravidian movement enshrined that corpus in its cultural agenda. The two main Dravidian parties have sustained to this day the political and cultural basis of the Muslim component in Tamil linguistic nationalism. In fact after the demolition of the Babri Masjid the most powerful and compelling attack on Hindu chauvinism came from the Dravidian camp. Pirapanjan, a respected columnist in Tamil Nadu, told the R.S.S., V.H.P and the B.J.P. that 'the Muslim League is a democratic movement; it is not, like your organizations, one given to bigoted chauvinism and murder... If you say that there was no Masjid, I will say that Ram's temple was only a toilet'.

Linguistic Nationalism

Therefore, when linguistic nationalism began to articulate itself as a force among the Tamils of the north and east of Sri Lanka, the Muslims who lived there – a large number of whom knew no other language but Tamil – had reason to see themselves as an integral part of the project. The Federal Party adopted a resolution at its Trincomalee conference in 1958 that there should also be a separate federal unit for the Muslims. The Tamil nationalist leadership assumed at that time that the sentiments of Tamil linguistic nationalism would preserve the Muslim community of the north and east within its fold. It had been so in Tamil Nadu. Federal Party politicians began using the term 'Tamil speaking people' on this assumption.

The armed Tamil groups, when they took up the cause of fighting for a separate state, inherited the notion that linguistic political identity would somehow overwhelm the Islamic consciousness of the Muslims living in the Tamil homeland. While it was in India, the LTTE went even further and adopted the concept of 'Islamic Tamils' from the vocabulary of the Dravidian movement. In doing so the Tigers seem to have thought they were being more faithful to the Dravidian tradition than the others.

However, all Tamil nationalists including the ideologues of the LTTE failed to mark the fact that the Muslims and their leaders in Tamil Nadu had and continue to have common cause with the Dravidian movement against Hindi-Hindu hegemony in the Indian polity. Whereas in Sri Lanka the possibility of profitable collaboration with Sinhala majoritarian politics has always been open to Muslim elites from the time of independence.

Contrary Trend

There was another trend that was running counter to the Tamil ideal of inclusive linguistic nationalism. The prosperous middle class which emerged among the Muslims of the Batticaloa and Amparai districts from the ruins of Tamil absentee landlordism became increasingly attracted to-

wards pan-Islam as an internationally assertive force. This post seventies economic prosperity saw Muslim villages expanding and buying up substantial chunks of land in bordering Tamil villages. Many Tamils in the villages of Karaitivu, Pandirippu, Periyaneelavania, Araipattai, Manjanthoduvai and Eravur were alarmed at what they saw as a distinct possibility of their traditional homes being swallowed up by Muslim expansion. The word 'Soni' -Muslim- that had been a rather neutral term in the Batticaloa dialect of Tamil rapidly acquired a virulent connotation in the politics of Muslim-Tamil village border tensions.

Many Tamil groups further aggravated these tensions by treating the Muslims in the east as part of Tamil society and by making harassing demands on Muslim traders and farmers as they were wont to make on Tamil traders and farmers. Yet the Muslims in the east remained quite undecided until 1985 whether they should throw in their lot with the Eelam Cause in their long term interests or whether they should remain neutral spectators.

The covert intervention of the Ministry of National Security changed this attitude into one of inveterate hatred in 1985 – a detailed report by a neutral Sinhala observer on the first large scale Tamil-Muslim conflagration in the east revealed the role played by a section of the security forces in organising and backing some Muslims into attacking Tamil villages.

All the Tamil groups except the LTTE demonstrated their solidarity with the affected Tamil villages, from where a large number of their cadre were derived, by undertaking retaliatory attacks on neighbouring Muslim villages.

LTTE's Principled Stand

The LTTE which in 1985 had a very small following in the east took a very strong and what it saw as a principled stand – true to its ideals of Tamil linguistic nationalism – that any Tamil caught attacking Muslims should be punished. The Tiger leader for the east at that time, Basheer Kaaka of Ariyalai in Jaffna, attempted to campaign among the other groups to follow suit. He was scorned as being an insensitive northerner. Kumarappa who succeeded Basheer Kaaka as LTTE's military commander in the east followed the same strict policy of punishing Tamils who were seen as 'acting in a manner detrimental to Tamil-Muslim harmony'. Although the LTTE was very much aware at that time about the activities of various 'fundamentalist' groups such as Hishbullah and Jihad, they generally endeavoured to maintain good relations with many Muslim villages – particularly those which lay on their regular paths. This policy paid excellent dividend when the LTTE fell out with the IPKF. The Indian army came to believe in due course that the Tigers were able to survive in the east because of the Muslims. The other Tamil groups contributed in no small measure, usually as a handy pretext to deflect criticism about their bungling methods, to strengthen this belief.

Many Muslims, on the other hand, who were being regularly harassed by the local Indian commander and his men for cheap or free electronic goods – which were, along with coconut oil and spices, being smuggled to India through military transport – quietly sympathised with the LTTE's war against the IPKF.

Role of Other Tamil Groups

The IPKF in the east also found that the best way to secure the full allegiance of the Tamils and the anti-LTTE groups in the Batticaloa and Ampara districts was to tacitly 'grant' them permission to take out their revenge on those Muslim villages which were identified as having taken part in the 1985 incidents. The anti-LTTE groups made ample use of the opportunity to wreak havok on villages which had been very friendly towards the Tamils in '85. (A recently published book called *Eelathin Dru Moolai'* gives an account of this from the Sammanthurai Muslim point of view).

The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), meanwhile had been persuaded by the Indian High Commission in Colombo to contest the provincial council election to the merged northeast. The LTTE denounced SLMC's leader, Ashraff as a traitor and accused him of having taken a large bribe from the Indians. But the SLMC ignored the LTTE and developed a strong relationship with the EPRLF in general and its leader Padmanabha in particular. The Muslim United Liberation Front (MULF), saw this situation as an ideal opportunity to encroach and capture the SLMC's political space in the east. It had to cash in on the antipathy towards the Indian army among many Muslims; and with that in mind it renewed the understanding it had reached with the LTTE in Madras. (The term Islamic Tamils was used in this agreement with the MULF). Thus the MULF exposed the SLMC's role in setting up the Tamil National Army (TNA).

Targeting SLMC

The LTTE's main objective when it emerged from the Kanjikudicha Aaru jungle in the Ampara district was to wipe out the TNA and all its constituent groups. The SLMC, therefore was one of them. The MULF was hoping to be the political beneficiary of the LTTE's military drive to eradicate the SLMC as part of the Indian backed TNA. The LTTE's antagonism towards the SLMC at this juncture arose purely from its perception of that party as an Indian stooge; and therefore inimical to its security in the east.

Hence, even when the Tigers had successfully destroyed the TNA in the east, they, with the assistance of Muslims who had joined them during the IPKF war, wanted to make doubly sure that the SLMC was totally wiped out in all the major villages and towns. In January 1990 a Muslim youth of Kattankudy who had become an area leader of the LTTE was murdered in his village; the alarmed Tiges launched a house to house search and arrested many who were suspected to be members of Jihad groups and the TNA wing of the SLMC. Although the MULF acquiesced at what was going on while venturing to suggest some remedies, a large number of Muslims were chagrined at what they saw as

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A Perspective on Educating for Peace

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In the current climate of heightened tension and open hostilities, the need to develop a new initiative in educating for peace is very apparent. Its aim must be to create a climate of thought within which political leaders will be spurred on to work for the resolution of conflict beween warring parties through non-military means. It must also be a climate conducive to foster reconciliation between estranged communities, so that Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims can once again live together as neighbours and friends – as they have done for centuries. Indeed, in the present atmosphere in which killing is so routinized, it is no longer adequate to educate toward the goal of avoidance of conflict or warfare. What Sri Lanka needs in this hour of crisis is a new and certainly a more inclusive vision of humanity, which could offer a basis for positive peace making. Parents, teachers, journalists and community leaders have much to contribute to this process.

Peace making on the other hand cannot expect to gain ground, without also struggling against the prevailing, and indeed popular ideology of 'us' against 'them', that is, the collective notions of identifying 'us' Tamils as against all 'those' non-Tamils and 'us' Sinhalese as against all 'those' non-Sinhalese. This ideology continues to inflame the distinctions between the peoples of Sri Lanka, which frequently manifests itself in the 'politics of hatred' and the 'politics of purity', the twin expressions of identity politics.[1] The popularity of this ideology is to be explained by the fact that its proponents use age old materials, for example, the *Puranas* and the *Mahavamsa*, in new ways. therefore, to be effective in dealing with this ideology, educators for peace must be able to identify these sources and also the channels through which the ideas are transmitted.

Here I give a Tamil example of how the ideology that underlies the 'politics of purity' and the 'politics of hatred' is fashioned, by the use of old and new materials, making it a potent weapon wielded by communalists.

Images of 'them' from Ancient Puranas

In a recent work Rajmohan Ramanathapillai has shown how puranic and epic symbols of the past continue to operate intimately within Sri Lankan Tamil society, motivating people, shaping their conduct and instilling a sense of dharma; consequently giving meaning to social and political actions.[2] One of the strongest ideas which the puranas and the epic convey is the notion that evil doers will ultimately be destroyed by good people, even with the aid of violence. This dominant idea found in the stories, has been disseminated widely through school text books, newspapers and cinema, as well as through ritual enactments (*curan pur ceremony*), recitations (*kathapirasangam*) and theatrical performances (*natakam, nattu kuttu, villu pattu*).[3]

The Tamil puranic view of the fate of evil-doers was based on the earlier Gupta Puranas, composed by brahmans. The Gupta Puranas portray a world in decline due to the corrupting and heretical nature of the Kali Age. In these works we would find sharp and contemptuous denunciations of the heretics (*nastikas*) and the barbarians (*mlecchas*), followed by a confident assertion that they would all be exterminated at the end of the Kali Age, when Dharma would again be restored. This theme was borrowed and popularised by the authors of the Tamil puranas during their disputations with the Jains and the Buddhists, from the seventh to the thirteenth centuries A.D. We would at this time find the terms 'heretic' and 'barbarian' being used in a sense that is familiar to us today.

First, in the atmosphere of emotional, bhakti religiosity, heresy was very much in the eye of the beholder. Once the early heretics, the Buddhists and the Jains had largely disappeared from the Tamil scene, we would find that to the Saivites the Vaisnavites became heretics, and vice versa. As Wendy O'Flaherty has observed from the sixth century onwards, 'Hindus came to use the term "heretic" as a useful swear word to indicate any one who disagreed with them, much as the late senator Joseph McCarthy used the term "Communist"'.[4] In the current politically charged atmosphere, the same emotional approach to dealing with heretics is being re-enacted in the Tamil politics of denunciation. Anyone who politically disagrees is turned into a heretic: he or she would be condemned as a **Thesa thurohi** (betrayer of a nation), and be subject to either banishment or extermination.

Secondly, from the tenth century onwards when the caste system had become fully developed in the Tamil country, anyone who did not observe the *muraika* (the rules), was regarded as ritually impure, an uncivilised barbarian who deserved social exclusion. In following this medieval puranic distinction between the civilised and the barbarian, the Jaffna Tamils, as Bryan Pfaffenberger has shown, regard the veddahs and anyone whose lifestyle resemble theirs, such as the nalavars and the pallars, as **kattumirantikal** (barbarians), 'deemed to be not only low caste but also thoroughly evil and dangerous (*kettavarkal*, bad people), possessing a propensity to create disorder.[5]

When these vellarlar-brahman standards of civility are pressed a little further, the Sinhalese, Tamil speaking Muslims and Batticaloa Tamils could also become classed as barbarians. Such a development is only to be anticipated. From a Jaffna Tamil point of view:

> Sinhala people appear to be very easily angered and potentially violent, a character trait that, in Tamil ethnophysiology, is thought to stem from a lack of sexual and ritual diligence. What is more, Jaffna Tamils believe very firmly that the other Tamil-speaking groups of the island – the Tamil-speaking Muslims, the so-called Indian Tamils of the central highlands, and the East Coast Tamils – are also less diligent than Jaffna Tamils in keeping up the ancient ways, and on this account Jaffna folk rank them lower and refuse to marry them.[6]

It would indeed be surprising if such a powerful concept does not enter into the current political discourse. When, for instance, Jaffna Tamils refer to the EPRLF, an East Coast based militant group, as *Eelattu pallar* they are in fact saying that 'those' people are barbarians, *kettavarkal* (bad people), and dangerous, and not to be politically trusted. The term clearly has powerful religious, social and political connotations. It is this perception that led to, and justified, the savage attacks on them in Jaffna, in December, 1986; when a large number of them were killed and the rest expelled from the peninsula.

Images of 'us' from Modern Historiography

While the *Puranas* have been useful in defining 'those' non-Tamils, modern historiography, since the publication

of Rasanayagam's *Ancient Jaffna* in 1926, has served to define 'us' Tamils, by presenting a separate and distinct past, often in conflict with the Sinhalese past.[7] Rasanayagam, through selective use of available data, tried 'to prove that not only was Sri Lanka's Tamil history the history of Jaffna, but that practically the whole history of the island was Tamil-Hindu or Dravidian history, or at least widely influenced by Tamil history'.[8] Also, by connecting the Aryacakravarti rulers of the Jaffna Kingdom to brahmans, he bestowed Tamil ancestry with a sacred and prestigious origin.[9]

Padmanathan's claims were more modest. In the Kingdom of Jaffna (1978) he too, presents a Tamil Hindu past, although it is a version of the Tamil past that is separate from the Sinhalese Buddhist past, and from this premise, he made an important claim that 'the Hindu tradition, along with the Tamil language, forms the bases of Tamil identity'.[10] This same image of 'us' was propagated more vigorously by Satyendra: to be a Tamil is to speak Tamil, and to be a Saivite; which for him is echoed in the saying, *'Thamilum Saivanum, Saivanum, Thamilum'.*[11]

It is difficult to avoid the feeling that Tamil nationalist historiography has in so many ways been directly influenced by Sinhala Buddhist nationalist writings and speeches, where it is frequently affirmed that Sri Lanka is Dhammadipa and *Sihadipa, the alleged historical bases of Sinhalese identity. On the other hand there are definite limits to such influences. The Tamils have no written document along the lines of the Mahavamsa* to authenticate their singular and separate historical identity, and therefore, the Tamils are in one sense, free to choose and to present many versions of their past.

So far, however, the history of Sri Lankan Tamils has been written from a Jaffna *vellalar* perspective which authenticates their distinctive values and the prestige of their institutions. The independent traditions of the *mukkuvar, vanniyar, karaiyar* and the *veddhas* has been either excluded or made subordinate to the vellalar history.

Educating for Peaceful Co-existence and Co-operation

We have noted how historical and mythical materials are currently being used to construct stereotypes of 'us' and 'them', a distinction which offers a basis for the politics of purity and the politics of hatred. Identity politics in turn is reordering Sri Lanka's pluralistic cultural landscape, and in consequence reinforcing these homogenous stereotypes.

Despite these ominous trends, educators for peace can take encouragement from the fact that heterogeneity and not homogeneity is the characteristic expression of Sri Lanka's many traditions. As such they continue to serve us as models of co-operation and co-existence. Take for instance the *Rajarata* civilisation,[12] where many of Sri Lanka's traditions did at one time intersect, presenting us with a significant model of co-operation and co-existence. *Rajarata* civilisation embraced most of the dry zone, an agricultural zone comprising the capital province, centred around Anuradhapura (and later Polonnaruwa), and several more or less autonomous outer principalities over which the centre exercised symbolic or ritual overlordship. This sort of highly decentralised state is typical of many contemporary states in South and South-east Asia.[13] As a result it was able to accommodate a variety of peoples; Buddhists, Hindus, Christians, Muslims and also the unforgettable veddhas, who would have no difficulty in retaining their corporate identities and lifestyles, while also actively co-operating with others to create a common civilisation.

For many Tamils, the *Rajarata* example simply reiterates the obvious: that there have always been strong pluralistic elements within the Tamil speaking people. In Tamil Nadu, where most Tamil speaking people live, religion and territory have never been considered essential components of the Tamil identity. In part because Buddhists, Jains, Christians, Muslims and Dravida-atheists in addition to the majority Hindus, have made substantial contributions to the development of the Tamil tradition.

The best known example is the Tamil literary tradition, which developed over a period of two thousand years through the collective efforts of all these groups of people. Here is a sample of their works.[14]

(i) Tirukkural (100-400 A.D.): The most celebrated Tamil ethical work. The author, Tiruvalluvar is probably a Jain, since the work reflects Jain moral code and its theology.

(ii) Manimekalai (200-550 A.D.): A well known Buddhist epic. The heroine Manimekalai preaches the Buddhist ideal of serving all living beings with detachment.

(iii) Cilappatikaram (200-450 A.D.): An account of the rise of Kannaki-Pattini cult, which is popular throughout Sri Lanka, particularly in the East Coast.

(iv) Tempavani (1720 A.D.): An epic dealing with the legendary life of St. Joseph. The author, Beschi, a Jesuit priest, is known to the Tamils as Viramamunivar.

(v) Cirappuranam (1715 A.D.): The author Umaruppulavar gives an account of Prophet Muhammad's life in a Tamil setting. Regarded as the basic text for Tamil Muslim religious life in Sri Lanka.

(vi) Iratcaniya Yattirrirkam (1882 A.D.): A Tamil adaptation of John Bunyan's: The Pilgrim's Progress, written by Krishna Pillai.

This literary evidence shows that the Tamil tradition, when taken as a whole, remains a powerful witness to the multiculturalism that has always been the hallmarks of the Tamil heritage. The educator's task is to make this tradition of co-operation and co-existence more explicit and obvious to all Sri Lankans, by exploring creative methods of expressing those models, and in consequence to challenge those who are in actual fact inventing a monocultural tradition which never existed.

Notes.

1. Edward W. Said, 'The Politics of Modernity and Identity' *The Bertrand Russell Peace Lectures* no.2, McMaster University, December 4 1992.

2. R. Ramanathapillai, *Sacred Symbols and the Adoption of Violence in Tamil Politics in Sri Lanka*, M.A. Thesis, McMaster University, 1991.

3. Ibid., p.33.

4. W.D. O'Flaherty, 'The Image of the Heretic in Gupta Puranas', in B.L. Smith (ed.), *Essays on Gupta Culture Delhi:* Motilal Banarsidass, 1983, p.116.

5. B. Pfaffenberger, Caste in Tamil Culture, Syracuse: Syracuse University, 1982, pp.121-122; R. Thapar, 'The Image of the Barbarian in Early India', *Ancient Indian Social History*, Delhi: Orient Longman, 1990, pp.152-192.

6. B. Pfaffenberger, 'The Cultural Dimension of Tamil Separatism in Sri Lanka', *Asian Survey* vol. XXI no.11, Nov. 1981, pp.1149-1150.

7. Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam, 'The Politics of the Tamil Past', J. Spencer (ed.), *Sri Lanka: History and the Roots of Conflict*, London: Routledge, 1990, pp.107-124.

8. Ibid., p.111.

9. S. Pathmanathan (1978) and S. Gnanaprakasar (1928) have on the other hand favoured a ksatriya connection. All these discussions on

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The Working Group also has highlighted the problem of repeated transfers of persons taken into custody as an element that facilitates disappearances:

Example 1: In a 1991 case, a student was detained and taken to the Kaburupitiya police station in the Matara district in the southern province where he was seen by his mother. Two days later the mother was told that her son had been taken to the Matara police station; however, the Matara police denied having him in their custody. Months later, she was informed that it had been necessary to take her son to Colombo for further investigation. The mother continued to make inquiries and was finally told by the Assistant Superintendent of Police in Matara that 'her son was no longer among the living' and that she should stop her efforts to locate him. (E/CN.4/1993.Add.1, para 83).

Example 2: In a recent notable case that was initially regarded as disappearance, on 9 October 1992 the Supreme Court granted compensation, under a petition alleging infringement of fundamental rights, to a student who had been illegally detained for three years. He was abducted on 10 October 1989 in Kegalle by a group of uknown persons. He was taken to the Kegalle army camp, then to the Kalapaluwawa army camp, and some time later to the Boosa army camp. From Boosa he was taken to the Pallekelle army camp where he was held until 7 August 1992. Although at some point during the three years the case became an acknowledged detention, and although the missing person has been among the very few who have survived a disappearance to initiate a fundamental rights petition, the pattern of continual transfers through 1992 demonstrated that this case is of substantial concern to the Working Group. Other facts of this case are demonstrative of ongoing patterns that facilitate the phenomenon of disappearance: it appears that the person was never, during the entire three years until August 1992, produced before a court of law. The petitioner was not told the reason for the detention, nor of the charges supporting the continued detention. The Court determined that he had never been involved in any illegal activities. (E/CN.4/1993/25/Add.1, para 85).

In the east where large scale arrests take place following cordon-and-search roundup operations carried out frequently by the military, neither fact of the arrests nor the whereabouts of those arrests are made known to the relatives. Given that thousands of 'disappearances' in military custody have occurred in eastern Sri Lanka to date, it must be expected that relatives and others would fear the worst when arrests which had been witnessed are subsequently denied. (ASA37/1/93). The primary elements responsible for disappearances have been identified as the security service personnel including the Special Task force, Muslim Home Guards and the LTTE.

Example 1: On 30 April 1992, the army battalion from the Pullumalai army camp in Batticaloa conducted a search and cordon operation in and around the Rugam village in Batticaloa district in easten Sri Lanka. They detained over 40 persons from their homes or farms, 20 of whom were released the same day and others within 48 hours, except for 17 persons, who remain missing. (E/CN.4/1993/25/Add.1, para 80).

Example 2: Over 40 men had 'disappeared' following a cordon-and-search operation at Kakkachchivaddai in the eastern Batticaloa District on 19 October 1992. After the men had been taken into custody, they had been taken to the Paliadivaddai army camp. Relatives who followed them there were fired at and chased away by soldiers. The military continued to deny that these men were taken into custody. It was only after the Member of Parliament for the area raised the matter of the 'disappearances' in Parliament and the relatives contacted the local office of the ICRC, it was learnt that the 40 men were being held at a military camp at Hardy College in Amparai. (ASA 37/1/93, p.7).

Example 3: On 23 October 1992, army personnel took into custody three persons, named Karthigesu Sothilingam aged 32, Samithambi Gunasekaram aged 20, and Sinathambi Rajavarodayam aged 28 from the village of Kakkachchivaddai in eastern Sri Lanka, but their arrests have been denied by the army, and their whereabouts are still not known. (ASA37/1/1993, p.13).

Example 4: 25 young men were detained by the army in the Kiran area, Batticaloa District, in January and February 1992. 11 of them were later released and the military denied that it had detained the remaining 14. Two of the 14 were later found to be in detention and two more were later released, but 9 young men and a 12-year-old boy named Manikkam Siventhiran have not been accounted for. (ASA37/1/93 p.11).

Example 5: On 24 August 1992, 13 persons in or around the village of Thiyavaddavan, Batticaloa District, were allegedly detained by the Central Camp police officers believed to be members of the Special Task Force and who were accompanied by a group of the Muslim Home Guard attached to the Twelfth Colony, Navithanveli, of the army. Witnesses reported to the local army commander, who denied knowledge of the detentions. These persons remain missing. (E/CN.4/1993/25/Add.1, para 75).

Example 6: In December 1992, during a cordon-and-search roundup operation at Pullumulai in eastern Sri Lanka, several young women were raped. Following complaints, although 13 soldiers were reportedly transferred, there is no indication that any disciplinary action had been taken against them. (ASA37/1/93, p.3).

7. Unacknowledged Detention

Amnesty International has found evidence (including admission from senior military officers) that security forces hold certain persons in unacknowledged detention, even hidden from ICRC representatives who visit prisoners at army camps. Secret detentions continue for prolonged periods, and it was admitted that records of detentions would be falsified to hide the true date of their arrest. (ASA37/1/93, P.7).

Example 1: A person was detained at the Plantain Point army camp in the Trincomalee district since 1991. Whenever relatives went to the camp, the army denied that he was being held there. While being held there, he was subjected to various forms of torture. (*See Section 4, Examples 4 and 5 for details*). He was held with 14 other persons. At about 6am each Tuesday, when the ICRC visited, most of the detainees were chained together and taken deeper into the Plantain Point army camp in a truck, to a place where only the army had access. Only a few prisoners remained at the usual place of detention in the camp for the ICRC representatives to see. After the ICRC visitors had left, the detainees would be brought back to the previous place and threatened that they

would be killed if they told the ICRC about their treatment. (ASA37/1/93, p.12).

Example 2: A person, reported to be a brother of a LTTE area leader, was held in detention over a period of one year in the Batticaloa district. He was wrongly reported to have been killed in custody. During the time he was held in detention, he was moved to the changing rooms at Webber Stadium which had been taken over by the army whenever independent visitors like the ICRC came to the prison. (ASA37/1/93, p.19).

Example 3: Another person from Kaddaiparichchan in the Trincomalee district was arrested by the army on 2 January 1992 and released on 1 July 1992. During the period of his detention, he was held secretly in a bunker at an army camp located about one-and-a-half hour's drive from Kaddaiparichchan. (ASA37/1/93, p.12).

8. Abuses by the LTTE

The armed conflict between government forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE and also known as Tamil Tigers) which resumed in June 1990 has continued ever since. The LTTE has held effective territorial control of the northern Jaffna peninsula, although government forces have regained control of small coastal areas including some of the offshore islands. The government also has regained control of the main towns in the north-east, but the LTTE is able to operate with ease in the surrounding areas of the countryside.

LTTE cadres have continued to commit numerous gross abuses of human rights, including deliberate killing of hundreds of non-combatant Muslim and Sinhalese civilians, the arbitrary killing of civilians in bomb attacks on buses and trains, the torture and killing of prisoners and abductions for ransom. Within the Tamil community itself, the LTTE executed persons accused of being traitors. (ASA37/1/93, p.14).

9. Incommunicado Detention and Torture by LTTE

Among the thousands of persons believed to be held by the LTTE and at risk of ill-treatment are police and security service personnel, Tamils perceived as traitors to the LTTE's cause, Tamils who had criticised LTTE methods and policies, Tamils who had been members of other political parties or militant groups, and Tamil and Muslim hostages held for ransom. Relatives of LTTE deserters who have escaped, or of people who have fled to evade conscription have also been detained. (AI p.14).

'Furthermore, a rising number of abductions alleged to have been committed by the LTTE and the existence of growing numbers of undesignated LTTE detention centres in the north-east were reported to the Working Group by some of the sources which have been reliably providing the Working Group with individual cases of disappearance'. (E/CN.4/1992/25/Add.1, para 9).

The number of prisoners arbitrarily held by the LTTE is estimated to be over 2,000. The invariable practice of the LTTE is to hold its prisoners in incommunicado detention and the whereabouts or fate of those held are not known to relatives. Although the ICRC has been present in Sri Lanka for the last two years, the LTTE has consistently refused to grant access to the ICRC to its detention camps. Individuals prisoners held by the LTTE, and whose whereabouts and fate are not known include a university student and writer Thiagarajah Selvanithy and dramatist Thillainathan, both of whom were arrested on 30 August 1991. (ASA37/1/93, p.14).

The LTTE routinely ill-treats and tortures its prisoners, and quite often kills them. According to the testimony supplied to the Amnesty International in November 1992 by a former LTTE member, there were about 250 'traitors' held prisoner in a camp in the Vanni (south of Jaffna peninsula). According to him, the prisoners suspected of being informers were routinely beaten and tortured during interrogation until they 'confessed', and some were thereafter shot dead. (ASA37/1/93, p.14).

10. Public Executions by LTTE

Executions, including public executions, by the LTTE of alleged traitors continued to be reported in 1992. Prisoners sentenced to death in Jaffna were paraded before the public before their execution, sometimes with notices around their necks, and their alleged crimes and sentences were publicly announced.

According to testimony given to amnesty International by a witness to the public execution of ten persons that took place near Thandikulam, north of Vavuniya, on the morning of 6 July 1992, a group of armed LTTE cadres brought ten prisoners, including two women, to the road junction at Paranthan. A large crowd of people who were travelling to Colombo from the north were gathered there, and forced to watch the proceedings. The prisoners had been accused of giving information to the army. They were taken down from a vehicle and told to stand on the sandbags which had been placed ready 'so that their blood would not stain the soil'. They were told to publicly proclaim their guilt. When two of them said that they had confessed falsely because they had been beaten during interrogation, a member of the LTTE ordered the shooting to start. The ten were shot in the back. An LTTE member then cut off the head of one of the executed prisoners, who the witness identified as a lorry driver called Nagarajah from Omanthai. The head was put in a box and a woman traveller at the scene was told to take it to the sentry point at the Vavuniya army camp. The LTTE took her documents, including her National Identity Card, away from her, so that she had no choice but to deliver the box and return for her papers before she could continue with her journey. The LTTE removed the bodies. (ASA37/1/93, p.15).

The LTTE's official organ 'KALATHIL' (18.09.92) published by its London Branch gave a detailed account of 9 'traitors' shot dead by the LTTE in northern Sri Lanka for having allegedly engaged in 'spying activities for the security forces':

(1) Mrs. Murugaiah Mary Manimalar, aged 52, trader, of Omanthai, Vavuniya;

(2) Ramiah Sivapragasam, aged 40, trader, of Omanthai, Vavuniya;

(3) Chellaiah Ambikaipakan, aged 38, trader, of Adampan, Mannar;

(4) Ariyaratnam Sivanantham, aged 31, trader, of Pavatkulam, Vavuniya;

(5) Visvalingam Nagarajah, aged 44, trader, of Uyilankulam, Mannar;

(6) Alfred Dominic Arulsegaram, aged 48, trader, of Omanthai, Vavuniya;

(7) Nallan Suppiah, aged 40, lorry owner/trader, of Ward No. 1, Walluwarpuram, Kilinochchi;

(8) Pederick Santhan, aged 48, farmer/trader, Adampan, Mannar;

(9) Parajasingham Maheswaran (Mohan), aged 27, farmer/trader, of Adampan, Mannar.

In January 1992, the LTTE in Jaffna announced that it had taken into custody three persons for having been 'traitors' in the past. According to the announcement, two retired police officers, Inspector Thamotharampillai and Sub-Inspector Perinbanayagam and another person named

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Chelliah were 'executed' for having been involved in the investigation in 1975 into the murder of the former Mayor of Jaffna, Mr. Alfred Duriappah – a murder attributed to the LTTE. At the time of their 'execution', all three victims were over seventy years and had been living in Jaffna ever since their retirement. During the same period, the LTTE announced that it had 'executed' two civilians Ramiah Ramalingam and Joseph because of their alleged connections with the army.

11. Abduction and Detention for Ransom

Numerous people have been held for ransom by the LTTE as part of its fundraising effort. The hostages included S. Sivagnanam, an 84-year-old retired lawyer from Chankanai, Jaffna, who was detained on 9 September 1992 with a ransom demand of Rs.2,500,000 (about US$ 600,000), who is believed to have been selected because he has relatives living in Europe who could pay the ransom. Relatives living in Jaffna were refused permission to see him and given no information about his place of detention or state of his health. (ASAL37/1/93, p.15).

Amnesty International has gathered evidence from a former member of the LTTE as to how funds were extracted from the public by force, including by taking children prisoner for ransom, and from a Tamil person from Batticaloa (in eastern Sri Lanka) whose wife had been abducted and detained for ransom, and released after the demanded ransom was paid. (ASA37/1/93, p.15).

Muslim Hostages: Civilians belonging to the Muslim community have also been held by the LTTE for ransom. Forty-three Muslims were taken hostage in the Jaffna and Vavuniya districts between June 1990 and May 1991. Twelve were released in March 1992 after 18 months in detention with no ransom having been paid. One had died in detention and nine others had been released in 1991 after the demanded ransom had been paid. The fate of the others is not known. (ASA37/1/93, p.15).

According to testimony collected by Amnesty International, the Muslim hostages had been held in chains at a LTTE camp at Usan in northern Sri Lanka. During the day, each individual had his ankles chained; at night, they were chained to each other. During questioning, they had been assaulted. While they were in detention, almost the entire Muslim population from Jafna were driven out of the peninsula under threat of death, and therefore the relatives of the hostages had no opportunity to see or even make enquiries about them. The hostage who died, Abdul Cader, was 68-years-old when he died on 16 October 1990 at the LTTE's Usan camp. He had been assaulted the previous evening and had been taken to his house to fetch six pieces of gold. After his return, he was ill during the night, collapsed and died the next morning. (ASA37/1/93, p.15).

12. Arbitrary Killings by LTTE

'In addition to reports of abductions, the Working Group was informed of numerous cases of alleged killings, including mass killings, by the LTTE. Reports indicate that often elderly persons, civilians and women and children are among the victims. This information indicates that the Muslim communities are recurring victims of LTTE violence.' (E/CN.4/1993/25/Add.1, para 10). The LTTE has continued in 1992 to target Muslims for several attacks. Some commentators having examined the pattern of attacks against Muslims by LTTE, beginning with forcibly driving out nearly 50,000 families from the Jaffna peninsula and other areas of the north, are of the view that the LTTE is engaged in the systematic practice of ethnic cleansing in the north-east of the island.

In apparent retaliation to alleged collaboration of Muslim Homeguards with the security forces, the LTTE has subjected the Muslim civilians to collective punishment in the form of arbitrary mass killings. *'The LTTE often carried out terrorist operations whose victims were hundreds of innocent people not involved in the war, mainly Muslim villagers. In fact, the LTTE had undertaken an "ethnic cleansing" in certain areas with a mixed population of Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims, who had lived together peacefully in the past. LTTE terrorist acts were aimed at instilling terror in the non-Tamil population and driving them out so that only Tamils would remain. This in turn would reinforce the LTTE's demands for a separate, enlarged territory. Thousands of Muslims and Sinhalese displaced persons had been forced to leave behind all their possessions in order to save their lives.'* (E.CN.4/1993/25/Add.1, para 110).

Example 1: 'On 29 April 1992, a group of about 150 persons led by some 40 LTTE members attacked the Muslim village of Alinchipatana (in eastern Sri Lanka), which has a population of 825 persons. Fifty-four persons were shot or stabbed to death in their homes. . .The LTTE then proceeded to attack civilians in their homes, thus murdering entire families of up to 13 persons.' (E.CN.4/1993/25/Add.1, para 11). However, the Amnesty International puts the figure of those killed during this attck at 62 persons. 'This incident apparently led to retaliatory attacks predominantly by Muslim Home Guards on the Tamil villages of Karapola and Muthugala in which a total of 88 persons were killed and about 150 homes were burned down.' (Ibid).

Example 2: On 15 July 1992, 18 Muslim men, women and children were shot dead when the bus they were travelling in was reportedly attacked by the LTTE at Kirankulam in the Batticaloa district.

Example 3: On 21 July, a train was stopped outside Batticaloa on its way to Colombo by an armed gang, allegedly belonging to the LTTE, and according to witnesses Muslim passengers numbering about ten were separated from the others and killed.

Example 4: In September 1992, 22 people most of who were Muslims, were killed when a bomb believed to have been planted by the LTTE exploded in a crowded market place at Sainthamaru in the east of the island.

Example 5: The biggest massacre by the LTTE against Muslims was carried out on 15 October 1992. Over 190 villagers, including small children, were killed in a massive early morning attack by the LTTE on four adjacent villages near Paliyagodella in the Polonnaruwa district. According to two survivors, the attack began at 4am, while the villagers were sleeping and ended about three hours later. The villages situated in the border area of the east were guarded by 26 policemen, 10 soldiers and 10 homeguards. Hundreds of LTTE cadres descended on the villages and opened fire. People who woke up to the sound of gunfire fled in all directions in panic, and they were shot dead as they ran.

13. Violence and Intimidation Against Freedom of Expression

Though the Government has claimed that peace and tranquility have been restored in the south of the country (meaning those areas other than the north-east), there has been an increase in the incidence of violence, intimidation and politically motivated acts of thuggery. During 1992 and the first two months of 1993, a sustained and persistent campaign of violence, harassment and intimidation has been undertaken against freedom of expression and association, and target of this campaign has been members and activists of opposition political parties, media personnel and repor-

ters, printers and newspaper distributors. Press reporters and photographers including foreign correspondents have been subjected to physical violence.

The **Civil Rights Movement** of Sri Lanka in a comprehensive statement dated 28 August 1992 stating that it was 'appalled at the new dimension of violence that is disfiguring our society. This is the most serious portent for the future peace and democracy in Sri Lanka', listed some 35 incidents of violence that occurred within a period of just nine months.

In February 1993, government officials of Inland Revenue, Electricity, Water, Labour and Municipal departments descended upon the offices of all newspapers and journals which were perceived as not supporting the government and threatened to cut off supplies if all dues up to the date of the visit were not paid in full. It is not without significance that most of the journalists from these papers have been closely involved with the 'Free Media Movement' which has been campaigning for a freer press with less government control.

'Outside the established war zones, in the peaceful part of the country, the year 1992 has witnessed increased levels of political violence. Its perpetrators include both pro-Government elements as well as members of State agencies. Violence or threats of violence have been directed against participants of political rallies or demonstrations of one kind or another, against members of the academic world, the media, the legal profession, human rights groups and Buddhist priests. (E/CN.4/1993/Add.1, para 13).

14. Climate of Impunity

The climate of ***impunity*** that has for more than a decade characterised the landscape of the law and order situation and the functioning of law enforcement agencies, and which became more transparently obvious in recent years has been one of the main factors facilitating gross human rights violations including the phenomena of arbitrary killings and disappearances.

'The Working Group has repeatedly stated that perhaps the single most important factor contributing to the phenomenon of disappearances is that of impunity. Perpetrators of human rights violations, whether civilian or military, become all the more brazen when they are not held to account before a court of law. Impunity can also induce victims of this practice to take the law into their own hands, which in turn exacerbates the spiral of violence. The Working Group feels that steps taken by the Government to deal with the question of disappearances have failed to address sufficiently the question of accountability, which is the most important means for the prevention of human rights violations.' (E/CN.4/1993/25/Add.1, para 87).

In Sri Lanka, where there has been evidence against a specific and identified police or military officer on allegations of gross violations of human rights, including arbitrary killing, disappearances or torture, experience and the invariable practice shows that the officer concerned has been left in position of power and influence even while investigations have been pending or being carried out in regard to his conduct. What is obvious is that in Sri Lanka the basic requirement set out in the ***UN Principles for the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Arbitrary, Summary and Arbitrary Executions*** has been consistently disregarded:

'Those potentially implicated in extra-legal, arbitrary or summary executions shall be removed from any position of control of power, whether direct or indirect, over complainants, witnesses and their families, as well as over those conducting investigations.'

The considered view among specialists in the field of human rights is that the above quoted principle is equally applicable to other cases of serious abuse of human rights including disappearances and torture.

There have been a number of cases in Sri Lanka in which police officers against whom proceedings had been instituted in courts on behalf of victims of abuses had not only been left to remain in their powerful positions while the proceedings were taking place, but had also been rewarded with promotions even after the court had found them guilty of having infringed the fundamental rights of citizens, and ordered compensation to be paid to the victims together with costs that had been incurred in bringing the proceedings. In some such cases, the government authorised the payment of compensation and costs from public funds. The impunity with which State agencies and their personnel behaved was further encouraged by such conduct on the part of the government.

One would expect a government which claims that it is trying hard to improve the human rights situation in the country to publicly acknowledge and condemn when and where abuses occur, set up appropriate and effective procedures to expeditiously investigate such abuses and identify those responsible, and thereafter vigorously pursue action to bring the culprits to justice. Two well known cases of abduction and murder, one a reputed journalist Richard de Zoysa, and the other a human rights lawyer Wijedasa Liyanaratchi, demonstrated most dramatically the prevailing climate of impunity in Sri Lanka, and the way in which the government dealt with these cases revealed the lamentable lack of resolve on the part of the government to take remedial measures to alter the situation. (Please see Annexes 'A' and 'B').

In its report of 1992 (E/CN.4/1992/18/Add.1, para 204), the Working Group recommended, inter alia, that:

'. . .The Government should prosecute more rigorously those responsible for disappearances and require that severe disciplinary punishment be meted out to government officials who have failed to take adequate measures to prevent disappearances. . .Acts found to involve grave violations of human rights, such as disappearances, should not benefit from indemnity legislation; Human Rights records of members of the armed forces and the police should be taken into account in the consideration of promotions. . .Members of these forces under investigation for involvement in cases of disappearances should be suspended from active duty until inquiries are completed. . .'

One year later, the Working Group in its latest report (E/CN.4/1993/25/Add.1, para 91/93) stated:

'91. An important example of the prevailing climate of impunity is the Embilipitya case, in which 31 students were detained and subsequently disappeared in 1989 and 1990.

'92. During its recent visit to Sri Lanka, the Working Group received further testimony regarding this case. The Working Group was told by the Government that these 31 students were not suspected of being JVP supporters and that the detentions were carried out for other motives, possibly personal. According to sources, the disappearances were made possible by the instructions of local authorities to purge the schools of JVP supporters through the use of informants.

'93. In 1992, the Human Rights Task Force conducted an investigation into this case. Subsequent to this investigation, the principal and seven membes of the army, including a high ranking official, were identified as those allegedly responsible. None of them has been brought to trial, arrested, held as suspect or questioned. The Working Group was told by the Government that as a matter of strategy in the case, the principal had not been arrested in order to

Continued on page 21

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Continued from page 19

question the high-ranking military officer first. The officer, however, had not been arrested or even questioned because he had been sent to the conflict in the north. Four of the other army personnel were also said to be in the north. It was not known where the other three allegedly responsible persons were. The principal, though brieflyy removed from his post on charges of accepting bribes, is now reinstated and is said to be in line for promotion.'

And at paragraph 97, the Working Group said:

'The Group is compelled to express its disappointment concerning the follow-up of a number of important cases such as those of Richard de Zoysa and the disappearance of 31 students at Embilipitiya. These cases demonstrate that the authorities tolerate the underlying question as to how disappearances occurred to remain without an answer and to retain those responsible within the system, unpunished.

15. Recommendations

(a) The Government of Sri Lanka should implement in full the 14 recommendations of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances contained in their 1992 Report (E/CN.4/1992/18/Add.1) and the 4 recommendations of the Group in their 1993 Report (E/CN.4/1993/25/Add.1).

(b) In view of the fact that the Working Group has noted that *'few of its recommendations had been implemented as yet'* by the Government, the Commission on Human Rights should follow developments closely in this regard from year to year, and for this purpose call upon the Government of Sri Lanka to invite the Special Rapporteurs on Torture and Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions and the Working Group on Disappearances to visit Sri Lanka in 1993 and thereafter yearly until there has been a substantial improvement of the human rights situation in the country.

(c) In view of the fact that the Working Group has reiterated its serious concern about the present status of the body of security legislation in Sri Lanka, the Government should be invited to undertake a review of all legislation relating to security with a view to bringing into effect such changes as are deemed necessary so as to conform with Sri Lanka's international obligations.

(d) The Government of Sri Lanka should be invited to become a party to Protocols I and II Additional to the Geneva Conventions relating to the laws of war.

(e) The Government of Sri Lanka should be called upon to ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment including making the necessary declarations under Article 21 and 22 recognising the competence of the Committee set up under the Convention to receive petitions.

(f) The Government of Sri Lanka should be invited to ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

(g) The Government of Sri Lanka should be urged to vigorously pursue a course of action to bring about a negotiated political solution to the ongoing ethnic conflict.

Sanmugathasan – The Unrepentant Communist

by N. Shanmugaratnam

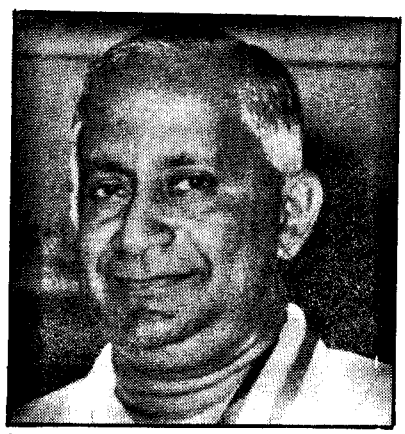
Sanmugathasan, a veteran of the left and the father of the Maoist movement in Sri Lanka, died in Birmingham, UK, on February 8, 1993 at the age of 73. I was told that Shan passed away peacefully in sleep. However, the last days in a place far away from Sri Lanka and spent in political isolation must have been painful for a man who joined the Communist Party as a full-time cadre in July 1943, barely two weeks after sitting his final examination at the University, with the conviction that the socialist dream would become a reality in his lifetime.

Shan recalls in his Memoirs how he answered his mother whose dream of seeing him as a colonial civil servant was shattered by the son's decision to pursue another dream. The disappointed but concerned mother asked her son what he would do in his old age. The young Marxist replied, 'By then we would have had socialism.'

The tragedy is just not that Sri Lanka had not become socialist at the time of Shan's death but that the socialist movement itself had ceased to be an actor of any political significance in a country gripped by a protracted multi-faceted crisis. Unfortunately, the left movement seems to have been largely consumed by the same crisis. The general defeat of the left and its marginalisation may have blurred the memory of the Sri Lankan public about the contributions of the left parties and leaders in the past.

However, the departure of a man who had unswervingly given more than fifty years of his active life to the communist movement and stood out consistently against the reformist and chauvinist waves that engulfed the Lankan left can not go unnoticed even in a world afflicted by general social amnesia. Sanmugathasan had not been in the political limelight for many years but the news of his death is likely to evoke in the minds of many Lankans – Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim – memories of the left politics and struggles of the 1960s and 1970s. Shan is unforgettable to those of my generation who joined the left movement in their youth and saw him at the peak of his political life in the 1960s.

Shan the party activist, the trade unionist, the Marxist-Leninist ideologue and leader, and the international spokesman for Maoism may remain a controversial figure among leftists and political historians. Shan himself had pronounced his self-assessment in the title of his last book published in 1989: *Memoirs of An UNREPENTANT Communist.* Unrepentant he remained to the last. It is not my purpose here to undertake a critical evaluation of Shan. Yet, in paying tribute to a departed revolutionary like him, one can not avoid referring to some of his contributions for which he will be remembered and, I think, deserves to be remembered.



Mr. Sanmugathasan

Shan became widely known beyond the left circles in the sixties when he led the struggle within the CP against the pro-Moscow faction and spearheaded the Maoist movement in Sri Lanka. He founded the Communist Party of Ceylon (CPC) with the com-

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rades who left the old CP with him. In the almost twenty years that preceded the split in the CP, Shan had worked hard as a full-timer and earned a good reputation as a trade union leader and political educator. He was an 'organic intellectual' in the full sense of that Gramscian term. During the inner party struggle against the Keneumen-Wickremasinghe leadership, Shan's strongest supporters came from the trade union wing of the party. The split in the party was inspired by the ideological dispute between the Chinese and the Soviet CPs and their subsequent parting of ways. The Sino-Soviet dispute impacted on all the existing CPs in the world and in most instances the parties split in two into pro-Peking and pro-Moscow wings. The most hotly debated issue was: how can the working class and its allies capture political power and establish a socialist system – by revolutionary means or by parliamentary means through reforms? Maoists advocated the revolutionary road while in countries like Sri Lanka the pro-Soviet liners advocated the parliamentary road.

Unfortunately, the question of the road to power was not a seriously debated issue in the Sri Lankan Party until it was externally imposed on it by the Sino-Soviet ideological dispute. Once imposed, the debate took a rather classical form: revolution versus reformism. The Bolshevik and Chinese revolutions provided the broad frames of reference for the advocates of the revolutionary path. Shan and his comrades defended the Chinese revolutionary model as the most appropriate for third world countries. They tried to root the debate in Lankan reality, but with limited success. However, a noteworthy achievement of the sixties was the spread of socialist ideas and an unprecedented interest in Marxist theory among the youth. In this period, Shan spent a lot of time conducting political classes for workers and youth in all three languages. He travelled all over the country giving lectures, addressing rallies and organising party groups. He wrote numerous articles in the party's newspapers and the mainstream press and engaged in public debates on the nature of the Soviet system, the Bolshevik and Chinese revolutions, and the feasibility of the revolution in Sri Lanka. He was equally active internationally and enjoyed the confidence of famous leaders of the world communist movement including Chairman Mao himself. Shan was not only a great polemicist in the Leninist tradition but a witty public debater with a great sense of humour. These qualities earned him both admirers and enemies. When he chuckled and turned his powerful, cunning eyes on a questioner from the 'other camp' before replying to a question, some saw intellectual arrogance dripping from his face while some others were enraptured.

Shan's political classes attracted many students. He was invited by student organisations at all the university campuses as a guest speaker. He was always lucid as a lecturer. Of the many young people who attended Shan's political classes, not all joined the CPC. Many years later, in the early eighties, in a private conversation a political activist of the sixties reminisced about Shan: 'He was the socialist guru par excellence. Young people attended his classes, learnt basic Marxism-Leninism and paid the guru tributes for enlightening them. Some of them joined the CPC while the others proceeded to found their own Maoist groups or join other political parties where they were often rewarded with high positions'. The 'socialist guru' was criticised by the impatient youthul supporters of the CPC for not making the revolution but only talking about it. Rohana Wijeweera, who was an active member of the CPC, succeeded in mobilising the impatient youths of the CPC and breaking away along with them to form the JVP which staged the abortive 1971 insurrection. Shan criticised the JVP tendency from the beginning for its narrow nationalism and petty bourgeois romanticism. Another group that broke away from Shan's party was the 'Peradiga sulang' (East wind) tendency which believed in applying the model of the Chinese revolution to the Lankan conditions. The seventies saw further defections including the split led by Shan's long time comrade Watson Fernando. Looking back at the history of CPC and its splits, one may say that those who left it on grounds that it was not revolutionary enough did not succeed in building a superior revolutionary movement. The JVP degenerated further and ended up a chauvinist counter-revolutionary force. We hardly hear of the existence of the other groups that defected with the aim of building new movements.

Political education was not the only activity in which Shan excelled. There were some moments of memorable political action under his leadership. Of the struggles led by the CPC, two are most remarkable from a politico-historical perspective. Both of them happened to concern the Tamil society: the struggle against casteism in Jaffna and the mobilisation of the plantation workers by the Red Flag Union in the 1966-70 period. In both these struggles, the CPC championed the causes of two of Sri Lanka's most deprived communities. The mass movement against untouchability was a challenge to the Saiva Vellala orthodoxy and the centuries-old caste structure of Jaffna. It succeeded in getting temples and some other public places open to the depressed castes. But the most significant achievement was the confidence and militancy it instilled in the minds of the youths of these castes. Similarly, the Red Flag Union gave the thousands of disenfranchised plantation workers a sense of belonging and a spirit of militancy, at a time when the other left parties had turned their backs on them because they did not have the vote. One may rightly point out that these two phenomena were short lived. However, one can not miss the point that only a leadership which cared for social justice and had no thought of courting popular acclaim or votes could have dared to launch such struggles.

Shan's death coincided with the end of the era into which his generation of socialists was born – the era of the Soviet socialist experiment. Shan also witnessed the end of the Chinese road to socialism. He was a Maoist who was firmly rooted in the Bolshevik tradition. As a Marxist-Leninist, he believed that the October revolution was not only the continuation of what began in October 1917 but also provided the model for the third world. He believed that Maoism had the answer to the revisionist reversals of the Soviet Union and that China would never turn capitalist. Recent history has falsified his belief. Yet, at the end of his career as a revolutionary, he declared that he was unrepentant. He had no regrets about the choice he made in July 1943 to the disappointment of his parents. Perhaps, he regretted that the first great era of socialist experimentation came to such a shattering end. But that failure has provided a stimulus for Marxists to explore new approaches to socialism. Shan had his misgivings about the new trends but he died with the firm belief that socialism has a future.

N. Shanmugaratnam,
Kyoto, Japan,
March 1993.

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THE SUB-CONTINENTAL SCENE

Behind the Congress-AIADMK Split

by N. Ram, Editor 'Frontline'.

That the cohabitation between the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) and the Congress(I) in Tamil Nadu has come to an embittered and messy end – there is a nagging question, of course, whether this is the final and irrevocable end – cannot be a matter for any real political surprise. Over the past year or so, the relationship has been continually tense, nasty and self-destructive. Several factors, current and historical, explain why this has been so: why, in fact, the relationship has been so volatile and also why it has endured at all.

For one thing, this was a unique 'alliance': there is no political relationship in any other State which can hold a candle to it. The basic character of this relationship was determined in 1971 – a critical juncture in national politics when the oldest party in the country had split yet again and the 'Syndicate' was at the throat of the 'Indicate'.

It was four years after the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) led by C.N Annadurai had swept to power in the State (winning 138 out of 234 Assembly seats and reducing the Congress to a status of 50). What happened then between the DMK led by Chief Minister M. Karunanidhi and the Congress of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi put the relationship in a mould that permanently altered the character of Tamil Nadu politics.

The Dravidian movement, it turned out historically, had replaced the Congress on a permanent basis as the party of government in this southern State, but this was by no means clear in the early 1970s. (It is another question whether Jayalitha's AIADMK has anything at all to do with the 'Dravidian Movement' aside from the MGR-bequeathed label and aside from the following entry in the movement's Book of Trivia: did you know that V.R. Nedunchezhian, No. 2 formally in Jayalalitha's Council of Ministers, held the same slot in C.N. Annadurai's Cabinet a quarter century ago?)

After the film star, M.G. Ramachandran, acting in league with the Congress Centre, split the DMK In 1973, appearances proved illusory. While weakening the Dravidian movement and injecting tremendous confusion within its ranks, the split did not in the least mean the decimation of the two offshoots of the original DMK and the corollary of a triumphal Congress return to Fort St. George.

The Emergency experience was obviously a crucial variable in the equation. The Karunanidhi Government was dismissed the first time in 1976 on trumped-up charges. The Emergency regime and the AIADMK found themselves in alliance in the 1977 electoral contest in Tamil Nadu and swept the field, and MGR found himself installed as Chief Minister. But since the Congress was displaced at the Centre – for the first time – three decades after Independence, those in power in the State and the Centre (MGR's AIADMK and the Janata Party coalition), and in reaction, those out of power (the DMK and the Indira Congress), tended opportunistically to come together – defying the logic of what had happened before.

Thus the 1980 Lok Sabha election found the Congress(I) and the DMK in an electoral embrace which meant a real sweep for the two allies who picked up 36 of the 39 seats. Within a few months, following the dismissal of his Government, MGR reversed the popular verdict in an impressive swing back.

It was no surprise that despite some moderate strains and tensions, the AIADMK-Congress(I) alliance endured for the bulk of the decade – until the death of MGR in December 1987 which caused a temporary split in the AIADMK ranks between the Jayalalitha and Janaki Ramachandran 'factions'. During the Janaki interregnum and a year of fraudulently prolonged President's rule, the Congress(I) led by Rajiv Gandhi developed a major political illusion: that it would, on its own, emerge if not as the majority party in Tamil Nadu, at least as the single largest party able to dictate terms.

This anti-alliance assumption fell on its face in the January 1989 Assembly contest in which the DMK of Karunanidhi, now a constituent of the National Front spearheaded by V.P. Singh, won in a big way. Humiliated and chastened, the Congress(I) returned to the AIADMK fold – which had now re-united behind Jayalalitha – and this piece of opportunistic wisdom got reinforced by the Congress(I) experience of being out of power at the Centre for over a year from late-1989.

It is clear that so far as Tamil Nadu politics is concerned, it is the alliance factor that has been critical and decisive in post-1971 electoral outcomes. Twice the 'sympathy factor' – the popular wave of sympathy in 1984 following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and supplemented by the serious illness of MGR, and the extremely powerful sympathy effect following the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) at Sriperumbudur in 1991 – has magnified the power of the alliance factor, giving the electoral antagonists virtually no chance.

All this recent political history means one thing: the alliance between the regional party, the AIADMK/DMK, on the one side and the Congress on the other has been a profoundly unequal relationship. The objective fact is that in the highly mobilised Tamil Nadu electoral arena, the Congress(I) has, post-1971, been reduced to permanent junior partner status – a highly galling state of affairs for any Congressperson.

The basis electoral arithmetic in the State has been remarkably constant, or rather stagnant, since the 1977 popular contest in which the post-1971 reality manifested itself. The Congress(I) is only the No. 3 player in the arena. For much of the MGR era in the politics of the State, his AIADMK (originally called the ADMK) was No. 1, with the DMK led by Karunanidhi clearly No. 2. After MGR's death, the No. 1 and No. 2 positions got reversed; and today the DMK seems ahead of the AIADMK (by every political indication, including the results of public opinion surveys) in terms of independent electoral support.

The Congress(I)'s leverage in this peculiar situation is two-fold. First, the No. 3 player is, as a strong rule, in a position to make the direct difference between electoral victory and defeat. However, there is no question of the No. 3 player being in any position to make any worthwhile run on his own. Secondly, and this is at least as important, a Dravidian movement party in power tends to depend on, and lean on, the Centre – its politics and policies. It can rarely assert any basic independence in course. Thus, accepting the hegemony of a Congress Centre is the other side of the coin to the AIADMK ruling the roost in Tamil Nadu.

There is not the slightest pretence that ideology or an agreed programme has been the basis of the 'alliance'. But

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READERS FORUM

TAMIL PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE IN CRISIS

In the January 1993 issue of the *Tamil Times*, Mr. Shanmugaratnam's essay on the Tamil people's struggle and his solutions reminds me of 'Pie in the Sky, Head in the Clouds, Pot of Gold at the end of the Rainbow, Ostrich' type of person with positive signs of cretinism.

To believe that the Sinhala people will give up the Lion Flag, unlearn the rubbish taught them by the UNP, SLFP and other chauvinist groups that Federalism is not secession, reach an understanding on how to work out viable units of devolution, take part in a lot of confidence building and in the larger exercise of reconstructing the whole country as a Federal State.

I also have the Brooklyn Bridge for sale.

Mr. Shanmugaratnam must have seen too many movies where people hold hands and walk into the sunset.

We have a head, it is not only to keep the ears apart.

Get Real Mr. Shanmugaratnam.

Kail. T. Rajah,

77 First Ave.,
Trenton, Ont.,
Canada.

THE NEED IS 'ACCOMMODATION'

While most of the Sinhala parties want a separate Eastern province, the Tamil parties want to ensure that the North and Eastern provinces are one and the fight continues creating untold suffering to the ordinary people. I feel that both parties have to accommodate and create a federal structure so that there will be an Eastern province consisting of the Kalmunai District while Batticaloa and Trincomalee districts will be part of the North-Eastern province. If we take into consideration the communal troubles in 1914, 58, 77 and from 1983 to date such an arrangement is very necessary so that there is a safe haven for each community in times of trouble, while all communities can live in each and every province and have the multiculture we have been used to before 1948.

There has to be accommodation in regard to the armed forces, so that there will be real democracy in all places, so that people can decide without fear of armed men and the minorities are represented in the armed forces and police, at least to represent the total percentage of their language group if not more. It can be even a land army for Agricultural and Industrial Development or in the regular army with army discipline. As one rector said of a famous former D.I.G., when he gave him a character certificate that 'if he is not in the police force, he will be a headache to the police force. The same situation is here right now and the best way to utilise the talents of all militants and give security to the minorities and to ensure that there is real democracy in the country, the Government and the militants must accommodate each other and bring peace and relief to the ordinary people without the interference of third parties, who will only be interested in their own benefit.

K. Mailvaganam,

2419 Kirstie Court,
Burlington,
Ontario L7P 3Y9,
Canada.

EELAM AND FEDERALISM

I was surprised to read Mr. Prabhakaran's BBC interview published in your journal (Tamil Times, March '93), in which he appears to say that the LTTE would be prepared to accept a federal system of government.

The Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) also stood for a separate state for the Tamils of Sri Lanka and then was prepared to accept some form of federalism. Now the LTTE having for years valiantly stood and fought for a separate state of Eelam for the Tamils seem to be going along the same path.

It is in the name of Eelam that the LTTE called upon the people to sacrifice and thousands of Tamil youth sacrificed their young lives. Tens of thousands of Tamils have been killed in this struggle. Many more have been forced to leave the country. There has been incalculable destruction in the Tamil areas in the course of this war. All this sacrifice was made to achieve Eelam, a homeland for the Tamil people to live with dignity and honour and separate from the Sinhalese who have oppressed us for the last 40 years. To settle for anything less would mean that all this sacrifice would have been in vain.

I hope the LTTE would not give up the cause of Eelam in the name of federalism. If it does, it will be guilty of the same betrayal the TULF was accused of earlier.

S. Karunakaran,

Brisbane,
Australia.

TAMPERING OF MAIL

Sri Lankan Tamils living in Jaffna are undergoing utmost hardship due to lack of medical care, electricity and most necessities of life. It has become incumbent on those living outside Jaffna to try their best to come to their rescue. The only way they could help is by sending remittances to their kith and kin. Some of the relatives have no other income whatsoever and are totally dependent on their remittances for the basic living. While people in Jaffna are facing such difficulties they are not allowed even this little help that is being provided by those living outside Jaffna.

Postal orders that are being sent to Jaffna from UK are not received by their relatives. This is a deplorable and disgraceful situation. Letters that are sent from the people in Jaffna to UK are being opened. It is generally mentioned that the Sri Lankan Army is responsible for this unscrupulous action.

I received a letter from my mother from Jaffna which was received by me in UK on 3/3/93, which had been opened and the contents were fortunate to reach me. This is a very important matter for the authorities to take note and rectify immediately.

S. Sunderam,

Cheshire,
U.K.

LTTE AND INDIA

I refer to the article titled 'The Tragic Saga of M.V. Ahat' in the February issue of *Tamil Times* in which the LTTE spokesman Anton Balasingham is reported to have said at a meeting in Jaffna that 'Indian rulers have suppressed the rights of various races in their own country. The whole world is aware of the atrocities committed on the minorities in India. The LTTE in the future will support the struggles of the communally oppressed people in India amidst their own struggle'.

It looks as if Mr. Balasingham is unaware of the present plight of the Tamil people. I do not know whether it is because of ignorance, which I doubt very much, or because of the world of make-believe in which he and his co-leaders of the LTTE are living.

Under the leadership of the Tigers, the Tamil people have become totally isolated within the country and outside. India's support which helped to strengthen their struggle to win back lost rights is no longer there because of the shortsighted and criminal activities of the LTTE. Their infamous and opportunist collaboration during 1989-

90 with President Premadasa, whom they now denounce as carrying on a genocidal war against the Tamils, and the subsequent assassination of Rajiv Gandhi has alienated India for good. The sympathy and support from many foreign governments and international organisations for the Tamil cause have evaporated because of the notorious human rights abuses, including the mass scale killing of civilians of other communities by the LTTE. Their forcible expulsion of thousands of Muslim civilians from Jaffna, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya, and the continuing massacres carried out against defenceless Muslims have totally alienated the Tamil speaking Muslims.

Today, hundreds of thousands of Tamil people remain displaced. Tens of thousands of Tamil people have fled from the north-east to live in the south – the so-called enemy territory. The LTTE which boasts about its total control of the Jaffna peninsula and its 'civil administration' can't even ensure the supply of the basic necessities of food and medical facilities to the people there.

In these circumstances, Mr. Balasingham's rhetoric about taking on India and supporting other people in India to fight their struggles is the height of political irresponsibility.

N.T. Joseph,

Toronto,
Canada.

LTTE LEADER'S BBC INTERVIEW AND MUSLIMS

Now we have from the very Supreme Commander and leader of the LTTE, Mr. Velupillai Prabhakaran, the reason why Tigers expelled the Muslim population from the northern areas in September 1990. In his interview with the BCC, republished in *Tamil Times* (March 1993), he says: *'In the Amparai district, communal riots broke out in 1990 in which a considerable number of Tamils were killed, and following this there was the danger of riots breaking out in Jaffna also. In those circumstances, in the interest of the security of the Muslim people, we requested them to temporarily leave Jaffna. But once the war ends and peaceful atmosphere prevails, we will permit them to settle in Jaffna.'*

I am a Jaffna Muslim and at the time the Tigers expelled the Muslim population, I was a teacher in a Jaffna school. My parents, their parents and all their ancestors, and my wife's parents, their parents and all their ancestors were born in Jaffna. We did not have any property outside Jaffna. Except for a few acquaintances, we had no relatives outside the Jaffna peninsula. Our home and homeland has been and is the Jaffna peninsula and we still believe and pray for the day when we can return to our home and our homeland. Now we are living in Colombo having been helped by some of our Jaffna Tamil friends who also live in Colombo.

Now that Prabhakaran has spoken and given the reason, let us no more hear from other leaders of the LTTE in Jaffna and their henchmen in Colombo and their expatriate supporters the infamous story peddled against the Muslim people of Jaffna that their expulsion was because of the LTTE suspicion that some among the Muslims in Jaffna had become 'informers' of the Sri Lankan security forces.

Now let us examine the LTTE leader's reason for what it is worth. First the claim about the communal riots that broke out in 1990 in the Amparai district and that there was the danger about riots breaking out in Jaffna also – no doubt after the war broke out in mid-1990, there were reports about tension, killing and counter-killing in the east, and in particular the Amparai district. There were reports about Muslim Home Guards attacking Tamils and Tigers attacking Muslims even in mosques. During this period we were living in Jaffna, and there was hardly any tension or animosity between the Muslims and the Tamils in Jaffna, and in fact there was no reason for such tension or animosity. Although divided by religion, the Muslim population to a man and woman have always shared their political, social and economic aspirations as those of the rest of the Tamil population. We regarded ourselves as part of same Tamil speaking people. Until we were forced out of Jaffna, I can honestly say that none of us experienced any evidence of 'the danger of riots breaking out in Jaffna also'.

Mr. Prabhakaran says that we were expelled in the interest of our own security. Until all male members of the Muslim community were ordered on that fateful day by the LTTE to gather at the Jinnah Mydhanam in Jaffna, we never felt any danger to our security. Is he saying that because of the so-called riots in Amparai, the ordinary Tamil civilian was getting ready to attack the Muslims in Jaffna? Is he also saying that if the Tigers did not force us out of Jaffna as they did, we as Muslims would have been subjected to widespread attacks by our Jaffna Tamil brethren? To say the least, it is an insult to the Jaffna civilian population to accuse them of getting ready to attack the Muslims of Jaffna. And for the 'National Leader' of the Tamils to make such a blatantly false accusation and insult the people whom he claims to lead in this manner in a BBC broadcast with a worldwide audience is beyond belief and is an act of shameless betrayal of a people who have had to endure so much hardship, suffering, death and destruction in recent years. What this demonstrates is that the Tigers, even at the Supreme Commander level, are prepared to lie to save their own skin even it means betraying and insulting their people.

The other point which the Tiger leader has to answer is this – if there was a danger of 'riots breaking out in Jaffna', then why was the Muslim population living for generations in Mannar, Vavuniya and Mullaitivu also forcibly driven out by the Tigers? Does it mean that the Muslims were expelled from these areas 'in their own interest' because they would have been subject to attacks by Tamils in these areas too?

If there is any justification in the claim of the LTTE leader that the Muslims were requested to leave Jaffna for their own security, then would it be right for the Sri Lankan government or its security forces to order all Tamils living in Colombo and other areas in the south to leave 'in the interest of their own security' if and when there was a threat of 'riots breaking out'? If that were to happen, the Tigers and their supporters would be the first to shout about 'genocidal attacks and forcible evacuation of Tamils'.

The tragic story of how and in what manner the Muslims of Jaffna were cruelly driven out would constitute one of the most brutal outrages in the history of the present conflict. On that fateful day in September 1990, all male members of the Muslim community were ordered by the Tigers to assemble at the Jinnah Mydhanam. Thereafter, armed LTTE cadres went to each and every Muslim home, and forced their way in and ransacked and removed every item of value mostly gold jewellery and in the process the protestations from Muslim women who were in their homes were summarily dismissed, and they were shabbily treated. It was only after the raids in all Muslim homes were completed that the assembled men at Jinnah Mydhanam were told that they would have to leave Jaffna and the north within two hours failing which they would face 'severe punishment'. Most of the people were herded into pickup trucks and dropped off beyond Vavuniya. Many had to find their own transport. They were not allowed to take any of their valuables. Within a

Continued on page 29

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Uncle *seeks suitable Tamil partner willing settle Australia for culturally and religiously oriented girls; Hindu, 28; Catholic, 27; both professional degree, Australian Universities. Box 1229, Carindale 4152, Brisbane Australia.*

Jaffna Hindu parents *seek professional qualified partner for computer professional son, 29, working in States. Send horoscope details M 650 c/o Tamil Times.*

Respectable Jaffna Hindu parents, *residents of Canada, seek professionally qualified bride around 24 years for their engineer son, 26, 5'7", religious, sober habits, Mars not afflicted. Please send details, photo and horoscope. M 651 c/o Tamil Times.*

Aunt *seeks professional Hindu partner for attractive niece, 26, slim, 5'6", living States. Please send horoscope, details and photo. M 652 c/o Tamil Times.*

Aunt *seeks suitable partner for nephew, 39, mechanical designer, 5'6" in States. Horoscope immaterial. Reply to P.O.Box 763, Hilliard, OH 43026, USA.*

Jaffna Hindu mother and brothers *seek professionally qualified partner for cultured, attractive daughter/sister, 26, working as accounts assistant in U.K. Horoscope and other details please. M 654 c/o Tamil Times.*

Christian mother *seeks partner from Sri Lanka for son, 30, following engineering degree course in U.K. Please send details. M 655 c/o Tamil Times.*

Jaffna Hindu parents *seek partner for engineer daughter, 27, M.Sc., handsome, 5'5", educated Colombo, States. M 656 c/o Tamil Times.*

WEDDING BELLS

We congratulate the following couples on their recent wedding.

Gandeepan, *son of Mr. Krishna Vaikunthavasan and Mrs. Maheswary Vaikunthavasan and* **Anna,** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Gotstaf of Jarnvegsgat.5. E 45335 Wyseril, Sweden. The wedding took place in Amsterdam. – 55 Warren Road, Colliers Wood, London SW19 2HF.*

Ganeshan, *son of Mr. & Mrs. M. Maheswaran of 63/1 Hill Street, Dehiwela, Sri Lanka and* **Vanitha,** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. N.S. Kandiah of 48 Connaught Road, Sutton, Surrey, U.K. on 4.4.93 at ADT College Hall, Portinscale Road, London SW15.*

Anapayan *(Jeeva), son of Mr. & Mrs. Kanthapillai of Uyarapulam, Anaicoddai, Sri Lanka and* **Nilani,** *daughter of Mr. Rajathurai and the late Mrs. Rajathurai of Potpathy Road, Kokuvil, Sri Lanka on 4.4.93 at Cedar Brook Community Centre, 91 East Park Blvd., Scarborough, Ontario, Canada.*

Maheethan, *son of Mrs. M. Anandanadarajah and the late Mr. K. Anandanadarajah of 1/1 E Block, Bambalapitiya Flats, Colombo 4, Sri Lanka and* **Vidya** *daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Kugananthan (Kugan & Meena) of 381 Brockley Road, London SE24 2PH on 10.4.93 at Great Hall, Bromley Civic Centre, Bromley, Kent.*

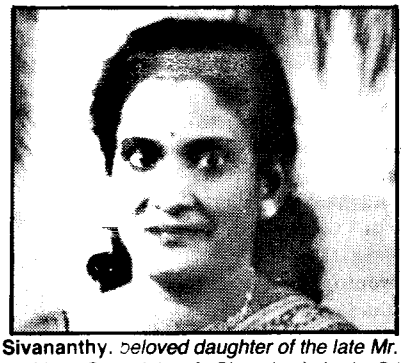
OBITUARIES

Professor Karunanathan Vanniasegaram *(Professor Surgery, University of Jaffna), loving son of the late Dr. & Mrs. C.M. Vanniasegaram of Mallakam, Sri Lanka; beloved husband of Kamalawathy; loving father of Rohini (Oman) and Vanniakumar (Canada); father-in-law of Dr. N. Sivakugan; loving brother of Sivamany, Thavamany, late Navamany, Dr. Iyngaran (London), Iyrani (Sydney) and Sivanathan; brother-in-law of the late Manickam Nadarajah (Chartered Valuer), Dr. Gnanasuntharam, Anandakumar and Priyadharshini expired. Cremation took place on 24th March 93 at Kanatte, Colombo. – 22 Rohini road, Colombo 6, Sri Lanka.*

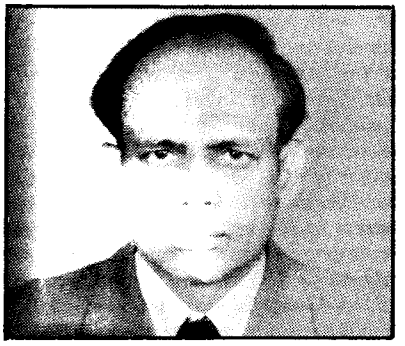
Mr. Chelliah Pathmanathan, *(Retired Richard Peiris & Co., Colombo); beloved husband of Sugirtham; loving father of Nandakumar (Path) Canada, Suriyakumar (S & S Associates Ltd., Colombo), Yasodhara (U.K.), Subadhra (Hatton National Bank, City Office, Colombo), and Dillidhra (U.K.); father-in-law of Gayathiri (Air Lanka, Canada), Kamalini, Sabendran (U.K.), Sivathasan (S & S Associates Ltd, Colombo) and Vijith Dharmasena (U.K.) passed away on 31st March 1993. Funeral took place in Kanatte, Colombo on 4th April 1993. – 9 Newton Way, Edmonton, London N18 1JB. Tel: 081-803 1454.*

Rev. Nesakumar Kadirgamar, *Minister, Church of South India, beloved husband of Ranee, father of Romila, much loved youngest son of the late Rev. J.W.A. Kadirgamar and Mrs. G.N. Kadirgamar, loving brother of Lila, Rajan, Alagan, Padma, Silan, Sita, Sathian and Kumaran; brother-in-law of late Arasakone Solomon, Mahilmalar, Ranee, late C.E. Anandarajan, Sakuntala, S.V. Chandran, Vathana, Suvendrini; son-in-law of Ratnakumar, Thangaratnam, Manorani and Devi passed away 28 November 1992, Christian Medical College Hospital, Vellore, India. Funeral and interment services led by his nephew the Rev. G.D. Anandarajan took place in Vellore. Services of thanksgiving were held in Maruthanamadam, Jaffna; Colombo, Tokyo, Toronto, Sydney and Singapore. Remembered with affection, Easter 1993, by the members of his family, nephews, nieces, grand-nephews and grand-nieces. Inserted on behalf of Mrs. G.N. Kadirgamar 'Welsh Illam', Maruthanamadam, Chunnakam, Sri Lanka; by Silan Kadirgamar, 5-4-22 Minami Aoyama, Minato-Ku, Tokyo 107, Japan.*

We regret that the following Obituary appeared incomplete in the last issue. It is repeated below.



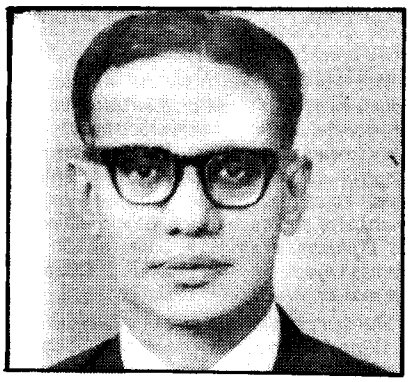
Sivananthy. *beloved daughter of the late Mr. & Mrs. Sivarajah of Chavakachcheri, Sri Lanka; wife of G. Sritharan; loving mother of Sai Bavane; sister of Mrs. Sivashanthy Perinbanayagam and Mrs. Sivayogi Sivayogaiswaran passed away in U.K. on 6.1.93. We thank all for their messages of sympathy and support during the period of grief. – Mr. & Mrs. Sivayogaiswaran, 3 New Leasow, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham B76 8YL.*



Mr. Murugesapillai Maheswaran *(55), formerly of British Railways; son of the late Mr. Visvanathan Murugesapillai and Mrs. Ponnammah Murugesapillai of 11 Lily Avenue, Wellawatte, Colombo 6; dearly beloved brother of Gunawathy Ammal (Australia), Dr. Sri Ranganathan (Ireland), Pathmaneswary (Wellawatte), Dr. Koneswaran (U.S.A.); brother-in-law of Ketheswaranathan, Chelvy, Dr. Velauthapillai and Dr. Saroja Koneswaran*

passed away peacefully on 10th March 1993 at 1 Clanricarde Gardens, London W2. The funeral took place at the residence of his beloved nephew Sithsabesan and niece Radha at 30 Brumfield Road, West Ewell, Epsom, Surrey KT10 9AP on 19.3.93.

IN MEMORIAM



In ever loving memory of **Mr. Velupillai Nadarajah,** *formerly Director, Ceylon School of Social Work, son of the late Mr. & Mrs. Velupillai of Chetty Street, Nallur, Sri Lanka; son-in-law of the late Mr. K. Muthulingam and Mrs. Muthulingam of Tellipallai, Sri Lanka, on the second anniversary of his passing away on 4.4.91.*

Sadly missed and fondly remembered by his beloved wife Muthu Ambikai; daughter Dr. Sakunthala; son Dr. Ravindran; son-in-law Mr. Suresh Thayalan; daughter-in-law Meera; grandchildren Arjun, Nisha and Satha – 43 Hollymead Close, Turner Road, Colchester, Essex CO4 5JU.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

May 1 *6.30pm Eastern Fine Arts Promotions presents* **Carnatic Flute Recital** *by* **Sri K. Gnanayagam** *at Wembley High School Hall, East Lane, Wembley, Middx., Tel: 081-205 214.*

May 1 *7.45pm Natha Vidyalaya presents* **Violin Solo Concert** *by* **Smt Kalaivani Indrakumar** *at Pump House Theatre, Local Board Road, Watford, Herts. Tel: 0925 41362.*

May 2 *Ekathasi.*

May 3 *Pirathosam.*

May 4 *Blessed Martyrs of England & Wales Day.*

May 5 *Full Moon Day.*

May 8 *6.30pm* **Jesudas** *in Concert at Westminster Central Hall, Storeys Gate, Westminster, London. Tel: 081-672 9942.*

May 9 *5.00pm* **Arumuga Navalar Day Celebrations** *and release of book 'Some Eminent Tamils' by the late Mr. V. Muttucumaraswamy at Merton Hall, Kingston Road, London SW19. Tel: 081-675 3698.*

May 14 *St Matthias's Day.*

May 17 *Ekathasi.*

May 18 *Pirathosam.*

May 20 *The Ascension of the Lord Day.*

May 21 *Amavasai.*

May 25 *Chathurthi.*

May 27 *Shashti, St. Augustine of Canterbury Day.*

May 30 *Pentecost Sunday, Whit Sunday.*

May 31 *Ekathasi. Festival of Cricket at Maori Park, Worcester Park, Surrey.*

At the Bhavan Centre, 4A Castletown Road, London W14 9HQ. Tel: 071 381 3086/4608.

May 3 *6.30pm* **Bharata Natyam** *by* **Kumari Nina** *with North Indian Music.*

May 8 & 22 *5.30pm Lecture on* **Mahabharata** *by* **Sri Mathoor Krishnamurthi.**

May 22 *7.00pm* **Sarod** *by* **Partho Sarathy.**

May 28 *7.45pm* **Tala Tarang** *by* **Shib Shankar Ray.**

May 29 *7.00pm* **Hindustani Vocal** *by* **Sri B.K. Chandrashekhar.**

May 31 *7.00pm* **Benefit Carnatic Vocal Concert** *in aid of Bhavan by* **Smt Sivasakti Sivanesan & her students.**

New London Offices for Airlanka

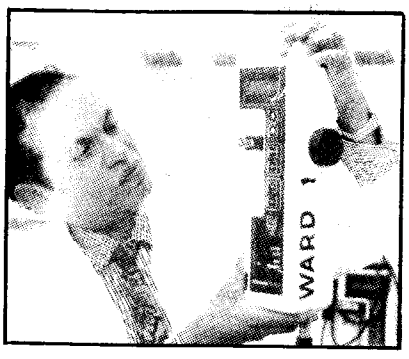
Airlanka will be relocating its offices in the new 'Sri Lanka Centre' in the building formerly known for many years as 'The Ceylon Tea Centre' in Regent Street, London SW1Y. The new centre will also be home to the Ceylon Tourist Board, the Ceylon Tea Bureau, the Export Development Board and the Bank of Ceylon.

Airlanka will be fully operational at the new premises from 15th April 1993. The address and telephone numbers from this date will be Airlanka Limited, 22 Regent Street, London SW1Y 4QD. Telephone numbers: Reservations: 071-930 4688; Administration: 071-930 2099; Cargo: 071-930 3766; Fax: 071-930 5626.

New Counter for Transit Passengers

Airlanka has opened a new counter at Colombo Katunayake airport in the arrival terminal in the immigration area for passengers in transit requiring connecting services.

The new counter will handle passengeres coming into Sri Lanka, who will be in transit but whose connecting flight out of Sri Lanka is over 8 hours from the time of their arrival. Such passengers would need hotel accommodation and other assistance, and the new service centre will cater for these requirements more speedily.



Sabanathan Wins Doctor of Year 1992 Award

Mr. Sabaratnam Sabanathan, Consultant Thoracic Surgeon, Bradford Royal Infirmary has been awarded the Hospital Doctor of the year 1992 Medal for the innovation he had pioneered to reduce post operational pain. The award is sponsored by the National Westminster Bank.

Mr. Sabanathan has developed the continuous extrapleural intercostal nerve block (CEPINB). The results of CEPINB at the Bradford Royal Infirmary have not only saved patients much pain but also led to huge financial savings. Mr. Sabanathan works in a sub-regional specialty dealing with patients from a wide catchment area with an estimated one million population, spread through Bradford, Airedale, Halifax, Huddersfield, Dewsbury, Rotherham, Settle, Liverpool and North Yorkshire. CEPINB has enabled the length of patients' stay to be reduced from ten or eleven days to six days.

A Lively Mridanga Arangetram

Of the different carnatic musical instruments the mridangam seems to be the favourite among the Sri Lankan students in London. This is because rhythm comes naturally to them rather than sruthi which demands long term training and constant practice. There have been quite a number of mridanga arangetrams here in the past and the recent one which we witnessed at the Commonwealth Institute auditorium on Saturday, 10th April, showed a difference in performance. This is because, we understand, the fourteen-year-old debut artiste **Nirshanthan Nagarajah** *is learning, in addition, vocal and violin music. It is well known that any instrumentalist, to acquire proficiency should have sufficient training in vocal music to execute the various grace notes and tonal variations on his instrument. Young Nirshanthan was privileged to have along with him on the stage all three teachers of music:* **Smt. Ambika Thamotharam,** *his vocal teacher, leading him through a variety of thala impregnated songs and capping them with a labyrinthian pallavi; his violin teacher* **Dr. Lakshmi Jayan** *equally assisting with melodic support, and his main Guru and mentor* **Muthu Sivarajah** *keeping a benevolent watch over his protege. Sivarajah as a percussionist and kindly teacher in London is reputed to have the highest number of students taken through arangetram. Ambika has selected a good repertoire of pieces to draw out the talents of the debut artiste and he too responded with equal enthusiasm.*

There is a regrettable tendency among students of music and dance in London to pack away their art and practice once their

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expensive arangetram is over. Parents and teachers should see that their wards continue to further their hard earned art and it is not thrown away to the dust. Since Nirshanthan is continuing with his music and violin we are sure he would find vocal or instrumental partners to cultivate his mridangam playing to higher levels.

– S. Sivapatha Sundaram.

Sri Lankan Medical Symposium

The Medical Institute of Tamils held their annual symposium on current health problems on Saturday the 20th of March at the Postgraduate centre, St. Anns Hospital, Tottenham. An impressive gathering of invitees comprising mainly Medical and Dental professionals based in the United Kingdom graced this occasion. The agenda was divided into two sessions. The first session was chaired by Professor N. Sreeharan, director Cardio Vascular Research of Smith Kline and Beecham. Speakers included a distinguished panel of eminent Sri Lankan Medical men currently in active service in the U.K.

Mr. R. Sathananthan a consultant Obstetrician from Glasgow opened the session speaking on the 'controversies of hormone replacement therapy'. Dr. B. Thalayasingam a consultant Paediatrician from Durham outlined the recent advances in Immunisation. This was followed by an illustrated talk on the diagnostic pitfalls of dental pain, by Miss B. Sivalingam who is a recent dental graduate from Bristol. Mr. Ravi Saravanamuttu, consultant in Restorative Dentistry from Guy's Hospital concluded the first session highlighting the various periodontal diseases with the back-up of some brilliant colour slides taken in his practice.

With a brief interval for tea the final session commenced with a talk on the 'Management of Health Services' delivered by Dr. S. Thiagarajah, a consultant Paediatrician and Medical Director, Family Health Service, West Yorkshire. This was followed by an impressive approach on the 'Ethnic Influence on Diabetes in Primary Care' by Dr. R. Namasivayam who is Croydon's Diabetes Advisor for MAAG.

The symposium was presided over by Mr. V. Sivapathasundaram a consultant Obstetrician attached to the Royal London Hospital who outlined MIOT's activities. A vote of thanks was proposed by Dr. A.H.Y. Rajendram who was the chief organiser of this symposium.

Dr. K.C. Rajasingham.

Continued from page 13

LTTE's roughshod treatment of their community. The death of a popular youth leader of the SLMC at Sammanthurai allegedly under LTTE torture further embittered them. A large number of SLMC youth and members of the assorted Jihad groups fled the east promising dire revenge. (These were the youth who accompanied the Army when it moved into the east in June-July 1990).

The LTTE meanwhile was planning to strengthen its alliance with the MULF and recruit a large number of youth among the Muslims to consolidate its position in the east, little realising that their Muslim members were displaying their newfound power in their villages much to the silent irritation of their community.

Teaching a Lesson

At this juncture the eastern command of the LTTE passed into the hands of a group of boys from Batticaloa who shared the view of their fellow villagers that the 'Soni' should be 'shown' his place in the east. The ideals of Tamil linguistic nationalism which their predecessors Basheer Kaaka and Kumarappa stood for, made very little sense to them; their experience and environment taught them to mistrust the Muslims. Karuna, Reagan, David, Nithy and Karikalan were the new leaders – more alive to local Tamil sentiments and perceptions – who argued within their organisation that the Muslims should be taught a good lesson for collaborating with the army when it moved in, after Eelam War Two began in earnest. They also clamoured with the leadership in Jaffna that if they were to retain their support among the Tamils in the east they had to avenge the death and destruction caused by Muslims who had followed the army into the Batticaloa and Ampara districts. They asserted that it was an absolute priority. This was the same stand taken by the local leaders of the other groups in 1985 (and under the IPKF) which the LTTE strongly opposed at that time.

It was also believed that massacres of Muslims were carried out by the local LTTE leadership in Batticaloa at that time to offset poor military performance in the early stages of Eelam War Two.

Review of Tiger Strategy

However, such developments in the east appear to have prompted the LTTE to review its strategy of consolidating a liberated zone in the north in the first phase of its war for separation. The Muslims in the north, could in the eyes of the Tiger, become a potential source for destabilisation in their liberated zone. The failure of Tamil linguistic nationalism in the east as a binding ideology was seen as pointing in that direction. Therefore the massacre of hundreds of innocent Muslims in retaliatory attacks by the LTTE in the Batticaloa district became an ideal pretext for the Tiger leadership in Jaffna to 'cleanse' the north of Muslims with little or no violence. Later the activities of Muslim home guards against Tamil civilians in the east which further aggravated anti-Muslim feelings among the Tamils created an atmosphere in which the LTTE assumed it would have the moral approbation of the local Tamils to engage in a large scale massacre of Muslims which they expected would terrorize that community once and for all, making them shun, out of sheer terror, any harmful design against the Tamil community in the east. The LTTE leadership appears to have come to the conclusion that the massacre of innocent Muslims in Medirigiriya has achieved that purpose.

Today, the need to survive in the east together with a compulsion to lay claim to the Dravidian movement's legacy in order to cultivate and offer leadership to the nationalist-secessionist trend in the Tamil Diaspora has made the LTTE rethink it towards the Muslims.

But given its track record one can never say with certainty that the change is for real and for all time.

Returns to Philippines

Richards Karunairajan who was Production Editor of Edenbridge Chronicle with Surrey & South London Newspapers has returned to the Philippines as the new Editor of the Manila-based Asian magazine IMPACT. Mr. Karunairajan who first went to the Philippines in 1964, is a Searsolin graduate of Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro.

Mr. Karunairajan who was earlier Editor and Information Officer with the Government of Seychelles for six years, has been a regular Tamil Times contributor. 'IMPACT will not only be a magazine in Asia but will also speak the mind and aspirations of the thousands of Asians in North America and Europe,' stated Mr. Karunairajan in a recent letter to us.

Island in Dire Peril – Impact

IMPACT, an Asian development through human transformation magazine is publishing an 8-page feature on Sri Lanka titled **Island in Dire Peril,** *in its May 1993 issue. The feature exhorts the urgency of the need to seek an immediate solution to the ethnic crisis in this South Asian state.*

The feature is in the form of a centre section magazine with views from a wide section of the island community that have been expressed from time to time including those of the world's first woman prime minister, Srimavo Bandaranaike when she visited the northern city of Jaffna to open the then Jaffna Campus of the University of Sri Lanka.

The May issue also contains features on plastic waste exports to the Third World, child prostitution in Taiwan, the struggle of the people of East Timor, the religious frenzy in India, ecology for children and peace demonstration by women in Japan.

Copies of this issue will be available on request with Tamil Times (Tel: 081-644 0972), at £1.50 each. Tamil Times will also accept orders for subscriptions for IMPACT at £18 per annum.

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the inherent, irremovable contradiction lies in the absence of equality in the relationship. At best, there is an uneasy *quid pro quo* which requires trade-offs, crude and hidden, all the time. This feature has operated over the long term.

You have only to graft on to this base the considerable superstructure of Jayalalitha's volatile, authoritarian, personalised, populist and *akratic* politics, the details of permanent factionalism within the Tamil Nadu Congress(I) and the wanton humiliation of the State Congress(I) leaders – and you can understand why the cohabitation has been such a volatile, loveless, mutually damaging and indeed unlivable affair. The AIADMK may dally awhile with a BJP beau, if only to put pressure on its political cohabitator and to sting it into jealousy; the Congress(I) has its own methods of hitting back.

Apart from the heavyweight oppositional politics of the DMK, the issue-based campaigns conducted by the Left parties, in particular the Communist Party of India (Marxist), and the plethora of corruption and abuse of power charges, the single-minded activism of an alienated Subramanian Swamy who has campaigned for the ouster of Jayalalitha and her stable of yes-men suggesting an intention to enter into a liaison with the BJP, a virtual non-entity in the State electoral arena, has brought the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee(I) and both its factions to the end of their tether – and driven the Chief Minister into a precarious corner. Tamil Nadu politics appears to be on the verge of a major, and perhaps radical, change and the implications for national politics could be significant.

(Courtesy of *Frontline*, April 9, 1993).

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few days of their departure, all the valuable property including electrical items, TVs etc. were put up for sale in Jaffna at cut-price!

Most of those Muslims driven out from the northern areas are still in refugee camps in the Chillaw and Puttalam districts and some in Colombo. You can see many begging on the streets near their refugee camps. Having done this to an entire community of people, the LTTE leader has the temerity to say: *'We are of the view that, while the identity and land rights of the Muslim people are preserved, it is by living together with the Tamil people that their social, political and economic life will be enhanced.'* It is the Tigers who have by their actions caused divisions between the Tamils and Muslims. Rather than enhancing social, political and economic life of Muslims, the LTTE has simply destroyed it and that is the simple and honest truth that those who believe in Tamil-Muslim unity should realise, and impress upon the Tigers to rectify the historic and barbaric cruelty inflicted upon the Muslim people. Until the Muslims are allowed to return to their homes and carry on their normal lives, any talk of Tamil-Muslim unity amity will remain plain rhetoric.

Mr. Prabhakaran has stated in his interview that *'once the war ends and a peaceful atmosphere prevails, we will permit them to settle again in Jaffna'*. So, the Muslims of the north must have the permission of the Tigers to go back to their own homes and settle again in Jaffna! May we ask the LTTE leader: When will the war end? When will a peaceful atmosphere prevail? When will you permit us to settle again in Jaffna? Should the expelled Muslims live in refugee camps and beg on the streets until the Tigers give them permission?

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proposal to convert the existing unitary constitution into a federal one.

10. On 14th December, the Tamil Political parties issued a press release giving an elaborate account of the manner in which the PSC had deviated from the tasks that were originally intended and how it had consistently failed to reconize the legitimate grievances and aspirations of the Tamil people.

11. Almost on cue, the Chairman of the PSC, in a note to the Speaker of Parliament on 16.12.92 indicated that a 'majority decision' was reached to de-link the presently merged North-Eastern Province and to devolve powers to these two distinct units along the lines of the Indian Constitution. It was also announced that an Interim Report would be submitted in due course.

12. The CWC, in view of these developments, decided to dissociate itself from partaking in any future proceedings of the PSC. The EPRLF and TULF, despite these provocations and intransigent conduct of the Sinhala majority parties, opted to wait for the Interim Report before deciding on the future course of action.

13. On 11.1.93, at the meeting of the PSC, the Chairman circulated what was called a 'Draft' Interim Report. This was basically an elaboration of the earlier note that was handed over to the Speaker and reflected a purely Sinhala sectarian opinion, disregarding the Tamil consensus.

14. Accordingly, the EPRLF took the decision to dissociate itself from the PSC and convened a meeting of all Tamil political parties on the same day. At this meeting, unanimity was reached that the Tamil political parties should reject the so-called 'majority agreement' and that a written response be forwarded. In addition, the Tamil political parties represented in the PSC took the decision to dissociate themselves from any future deliberations of the PSC.

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genealogy and varna status are highly speculative, but a maravar connection would seem more realistic in the light of linguistic and historical evidence. The Aryacakravartis of Jaffna were also known by the title Cetukavalan, meaning, the lord of the bridge – connecting Mannar and Ramesvaram. The Cetupatis of Ramanad, the traditionally acknowledged guardians of the bridge, not only bore the same title but have been known to have earned the title Aryacakravarti through allegiance and service to the Pantiyan kings. These Cetupatis were descendants of maravars, the martial predators dominant in the Ramanad district, who have a long record of engaging in predatory wars in Sri Lanka. See E. Thurstan (1909) on Maravar.

[10]. S. Pathnanathan, 'The Hindu Society in Sri Lanka: Changed and Changing', J.R. Carter (ed.), Religiousness in Sri Lanka, Colombo, Marga Institute, 1979, p.158. for a different view on this issue of identity see R. Coomaraswamy, 'Politics of Ethnicity' *The Ethnic Conflict* (1984), p. 179.

[11]. Cited in R. Ramanathapillai, 1991 7-8. For a critical analysis of this issue see S. Ratnajeevan Hoole, 'The Tamils: A Definition and their Religion and Culture through Change', *Indian Church History Review*, Vol. 36, 1992, pp. 88-135.

[12]. An account of Rajarata civilisation from a non-sectarian, non-colonial perspective is, to my knowledge, still to be written. This is a probable outline of that account.

[13]. B. Stein, 1980: 23, S.J. Tambiah, 1976: 113.

[14]. Mu. Varadarajan, *A History of Tamil Literature*, Delhi, Sahtya Akademi, 1988., K. Zvelebil, *Tamil Literature*, Wiesbaden, 1974.

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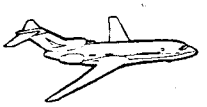

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